1032

Be ye also ready:

A

# METHOD

AND

# ORDER

Of Practice,

To be always prepared for Death and Judgment; through the several Stages of Life.

By the Author of the Method of PRIVATE DEVOTION.

*Behold now—I know not the Day of my Death.* Gen. XXVII. 2.

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*Psalm: 119 vers 59*
*I thought on my wayes and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies.*

# The First Part

Containing

The First and shortest Course of Preparation,

Fitted for Beginnings or sudden Exigents.

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## Imprimatur:

Octob. 6. 1693. *Guil. Lancaster.*

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

# AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

IT *pleased God, a very few years agoe, to put, and* (*as it seemed*) *a considerable while to* keep *the* Author *of the ensuing Treatise, together with divers* thousands of Protestants, *in such a Condition, that they* hourly expected *to have been* sacrificed: *For they were, in humane appearance, at the pleasure of inveterate Enemies; nor can they, to this day, look upon it as much less than a* Miracle, *that they* survived *those Years of* Dread and Danger. *Then perhaps most of them* lived *as people that really* thought *themselves* mortal as to one part, *and* immortal as to the other: *Then their great care was, not only to enquire, but to practise what might both* make and keep them ever prepared for Death and Judgment, *which they saw perpetually at their Doors, even in their Chambers, and in all Places, and in all their Motions.*

*In that juncture, a certain good Hospitable-Lady, being like* Martha busied about many things,

*and concerned ſhe was not* better prepared to entertain *ſome Friends brought into her Houſe upon a Surprize, her neareſt Friend (as a kind of eaſie Reprimand to her) put this Queſtion at random to all,* What ſhould we do to be always prepared for Heaven? *Somethings for the time the Author return'd, but promiſed, as ſoon as he ſhould come home, to put in writing, for that his Friend's ſake (who was under ſome Infelicity as to his hearing) a fuller and more deliberate Anſwer to that Queſtion of ſo important a Concernment, intending then only what might ſerve that ſeaſon (or our then Caſe) and fill about a Sheet or two of Paper. But all intercourſe, betwixt Proteſtants at a diſtance, being in thoſe Parts ſoon precluded, the Author's Friend died, and never ſaw the Papers deſigned for him. However this gave occaſion to the Author, with deeper and more ſettled Attention to weigh the Caſe in general.*

*Which when he came to do, he could not ſatisfie himſelf with ſo* narrow and perfunctory a Conſideration *of it, as was that which he had* firſt *taken: For he eſteemed the* ſame Preparations *would* not *be* ſufficient, *not only for* all People, *but even for the* ſame Perſons, *in all* Circumſtances. *Many* Omiſſions *of the* Iſraelites *were favourably by God over-looked, in their Wandrings through Wilderneſſes, and in the State of War enſuing, which were ſeverely puniſhed in* Canaan, *when the Lord had given his People* reſt: *And the* Preparations of the Sanctuary *were undoubtedly more exact and Abundant,*

*dant, as well as more Glorious than those of the* Tabernacle. *In like manner, a more* Tumultuary, *and* less distinct Repentance, *with a kind of* bold Resignation *of themselves to God, and a* constant Trust on his Mercy, *through Christ Jesus, for pardon of Sin, together with* Dependance *upon his* Power, Wisdom, and Goodness *in all their Ways, even shutting their Eyes many times against Dread and Doubts, and still* going on to commit *themselves to God's good Pleasure, with sorrow indeed, as to multitudes of things, which being done, they could not undo, but* never letting go their hold upon God's Mercy *in Christ Jesus, might be, and certainly were a* State of Preparation, *accepted by God from most People in those* Calamitous Days, *when they had neither Opportunities of Privacy, Self-Examination, and quiet thought, much less of mature and Formed Devotions, nor any of their usual Helps herein. We could not then think we had many Days, sometimes very few Hours, to prepare for our End. Almost every Person we met or saw spoke Death to us, and then,* doing what to humane Frailty was feasible, *was, in God's favourable Interpretation,* doing what was sufficient. *But* now, *that we are delivered from those Terrors, and apprehend not those (at least sudden) Dangers, now that we sit at Peace in our Houses, and sleep whole Nights quiet in our Beds, and have our Advantages of Retirement and Thought, (and possibly some of us are become more thoughtful than ever.) In these more happy Circumstances we can-*

*not but eſteem our ſelves obliged to a* Diſtincter, *more* Sedate, *and* Perfected Courſe of Repentence, Faith, Love, Good Works, Almsdeeds, Compoſedneſs, Heavenly-mindedneſs, *and (upon our Experience of former things,)* Contempt *of this uncertain, inſignificant* World: *And further, to the not ſuffering our Hearts again to cleave to the things that are ſeen. So far ought we to be from ſaying within our ſelves,* Surely the bitterneſs of Death is paſt; *or from* putting far from us (*as the manner of incorrigible People is*) the Evil Day, *Rather will it become Perſons in our Circumſtances to make Death familiar to us, and however God may ſweeten our Paſſage thereto, yet to be careful we never be* ſo taken with any good fare in our Journey, *as to be loath* to go to our long home. *Certainly in whomſoever an* immoderate love of Life, *an* unwillingneſs to die, *and* unreaſonable Fears of Death, *may be by God excuſed, they will be leaſt born with in thoſe, who, either by the Diſcipline they have been under,* might have overcome them, *or perhaps* once had: *which is the Caſe of all ſuch, who having been once in a good Meaſure prepared for Heaven, and thought themſelves near it, have again returned to an Earthly ſenſual Converſation.*

*The Conſideration of theſe,* God's different Expectations *from Men, according to the Circumſtances they are, or have been in, in reference to Death, cauſed the Author to caſt his Thoughts upon the Caſe put to him, into the* preſent

ſent Method or Model; *and to* ſuit *to the* ſeveral Conditions and Circumſtances, *into which Chriſtian People generally fall, a* diſtinct and proper Courſe of Preſcriptions.

*Of which Preſcriptions, here follow only the* Firſt Set; *and that accommodated, primarily (and intentionally indeed) to* ſuch a State *as the* Author *and others in the* Days pointed at, *were in; but withal (as is both intimated in the Title Page, and more particularly ſet forth* Chap. II.) *moſt proper, and for the main,* neceſſary for all ſorts *to begin with; yea, if new to them, to be by all, and* every one, ſpeedily and carefully practiſed, *leſt any Accident, or unexpected Providence, ſhould put a Period to Life, before the Poſſibility of a maturer Repentance: Not to ſay, that as to too many people in divers Emergencies, and unhappy Junctures, this Part contains a Summary of all Preparations to them Practicable.*

*It may perhaps be convenient ſomething were ſaid here as to the* Style *of this Part, or the* way of handling the Caſe put; *which in this polite Age may to many ſeem mean, yea even contempible. But the Author hopes his Readers will be ſo prudent or favourable, as to remember, The* Subject Matter *here treated, is to be* underſtood by the meaneſt and plaineſt people, *and therefore to be made as plain as may be. The* Study of ſuch Plainneſs *has many times occaſioned more* variety *(and even Baldneſs) of* Expreſſions *for the ſame thing, than would have been otherwiſe pardonable; which varied Expreſſions are ſometimes put in* Parentheſes, *ſometimes brought in by*

That

That is, *or otherwiſe. And if the Authors Intention herein be underſtood, it will appear, this way of* Explanation *of a harder Word, or Form of Speech, by an eaſier, is ſeveral ways* uſeful, *and ſo to the generality of People far* above Contempt. *Inſtances hereof the Judicious Reader may obſerve almoſt in every Page. But to aſſign a few,* Pag. 26. *the Term,* To redeem all time poſſible, *is uſed. Now what the Author's meaning in that Phraſe is, every poor plain Man or Woman may not perhaps underſtand; therefore in a* Parentheſis *it follows (*that is to make uſe of all Opportunities and Advantages thou haſt to prepare thy ſelf for the other World.) *Thus it is plain to all, what the Author there meant by redeeming of Time. Again,* p. 22. lin. 11. Meditate, (*that is,* think and conſider.) *Meditation is nothing but Thought and Conſideration. Sometimes again, the Particle* Or *is uſed to the ſame purpoſe, as* That is. *So,* p. 47. Decalogue, *or* Ten Commandments. *It is almoſt impoſſible to write, as our Language now ſtands, but now and then a hard or uncertain and dark Expreſſion muſt drop: But ſuch Explication or aſcertaining it, as I have uſed, I hope makes amends for thoſe Miſhaps: and more needs not be ſaid on this Point.*

*A Word or Two may be needful to be added, touching the ſeeming* Meanneſs, *or even* Baſeneſs *of* divers Materials *and* Obſervations, *which go to the making up this Piece: As to which Point no more ſhall be ſaid, but that it is to be conſidered,* ſundry things *herein are* writ e-

*ven for the* meaneſt, pooreſt People *that live,* (*for ſuch the Author has had occaſion to converſe with*; *and ſuch he is not aſhamed to own that he many times viſits,*) *People who live upon their daily Labours, nay poſſibly upon Alms. Theſe* poor Creatures *have* Souls *to ſave, as precious in the Sight of God as* Rich Mens, *and therefore are to be exhorted and encouraged to ſuch* good Works, *as are incident to their Condition, or as they are capable of. They are alſo to be ſpoken to in Language befitting their Capacities and Circumſtances. Now to ſuch as theſe it is plain the Author had an Eye, as in other places, ſo eſpecially in* pag. 162, 163, &c. *Let all Peoples Needs be conſidered, and each ſort take their Share, and perhaps little will be found contemptible, or ſuch which might have been ſpared. And thus much as to this* Firſt Part.

*The* Second Part, *fitted to Perſons of more Proficiency, and who have leiſure, and poſſibly a Proſpect of more time before them than ſome miſerable Creatures, that may be concerned in this Firſt Part, is as good as finiſh'd, and ſhall* (*God willing*) *be publiſh'd as this finds Acceptance with* Serious and Devout Chriſtians. *From ſuch the Author hopes he may gain ſome Intimations, both how he may amend this Part, and make the other more compleat: And the number of ſuch Souls may the God of all Grace daily encreaſe; and both perfect all that are ſuch already, and preſerve them to his Heavenly Kingdom.*

*Good Reader, make the ſame Prayer for thy true Well wiſher, the Author.*

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# ERRATA.

PAge 10. Line 6. read *Consciences* p. 14. l. 19. blot out *they*. p. 23. l. 21. r. *thee in the Knowledge of*. p. 30. l. 1. r. *some others*. p. 31. l. 17. r. *in Persons of riper Years*. p. 51. l. 2. r. *fix*. p. 61. l. 20. r. *First Stage*. p. 69. l. 7. r. *submit to Truth*. p. 80. l. 4. r. *we meet with*. p. 125. l. 11. r. *Grace*. p. 174. l. 2. r. *resigning then*. p. 175 l. 25. r. *plodding*. Escapes of some false Points and Accents are waved as less material.

# *The* CONTENTS *of the several Chapters and Sections of the First Part.*

*Quest.* WHat Course people should take to be ready for Heaven? *Or, (which is much the same) to be* always prepared for Death and Judgment?

## CHAP I.

§. 1. *To be ready for Heaven, and to be always prepared for Death and Judgment, are the same.*

§. 2. *Yet this Question contains two Questions in it.*

§. 3. *This Question no where expresly but, or closely resolved in Scripture; and some probable Reasons why?*

§. 4. *But Preparation, or being always ready for our Lord's Coming, frequently*

*enjoined, and its Nature ſet forth, at large, throughout the whole Scripture.*

§. 5. *The Deſign of this Treatiſe, and General Branches of the Preparation neceſſary.*

§. 6. *The work of this preparation muſt not end but with our lives, yet is to be begun as early as may be.*

Matter and a Method for Devotions ſuitable to the Firſt Chapter.

## CHAP. II.

The firſt Duty adviſed to, *Religion in good Earneſt.*

§. 1. *The firſt rank of people to be prepared for Death and Judgment, ſuch who are perfectly to begin.*

§. 2. *Proviſion for removing the Scruples of ſome.*

§. 3. *What Death and Judgment are.*

§. 4. *What generally makes Men afraid, unwilling and unfit to die.*

§. 5. *Such Practices as will anſwer the three Intentions propoſed, will be all the preparation neceſſary for perſons within this Period.* §. 6.

§. 6. *The first Duty to be practised, giving the mind to Religion in good earneſt.*

§. 7. *This much wanting in the generality.*

§. 8. *What is the meaning of giving a Man's mind to Religion.*

§. 9. *Uſing ones ſelf to think, a proper means to make the mind ſerious in Religion.*

§. 10. *A particular Train of Thoughts to this purpoſe.*

§. 11. *The whole Evidence ſummed up, and this Head concluded.*

Matter and a Method for Devotion ſuitable to the Second Chapter.

## CHAP. III.

The ſecond Duty adviſed to, *making our Peace with God.*

§. 1. *SEriouſneſs in Religion puts a Man immediately upon making his Peace with God.*

§. 2. *Peace or Reconciliation with God in what ſence ſoever taken, effected by Repentance and Faith.*

§. 3. *The proper notions of Repentance and Faith both in Common Language and Scripture.*

§. 4. *In Scripture they are often put so as to comprize one another.*

§. 5. *Tet is the joint practice of both of them absolutely necessary to make our Peace with God.*

§. 6. *Four steps to a penitent State.*

§. 7. *The first of them, a sight and sense of our own guilt, called by some conviction of Sin.*

§. 8. *The Second, Contrition; the way to work it.*

§. 9. *The third, Confession to God. What it is.*

§. 10. *Confession to Man. When necessary.*

§. 11. *The fourth, forsaking Sin: Two Branches thereof.*

§. 12. *The necessity of both.*

§. 13. *The Method of effecting both.*

§. 14. *Of Faith, as more particularly concern'd in making our Peace with God.*

§. 15. *Of Prayer in this Case.*

§. 16. *Of subsequent Care and Endeavours, and of the Lord's Supper, as the best Seal.*

Matter and a Method for Devotion suitable to the 3d Chapter. CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

The Third Duty adviſed to, *laying up our Treaſure in Heaven.*

§. 1. *THree Points neceſſary to be ſpoken to under this Head.*

§. 2. *A ſhort account what the Heavenly Happineſs is, which we are to endeavour to ſecure.*

§. 3. *It is no preſumption in a faithful Soul to aim at, or ſeek after this Happineſs, but in ſtrictneſs a Duty.*

§. 4. *Directions to ſecure it. Of chuſing God for our Happineſs.*

§. 5. *Of being full of good Works.*

§. 6. *Of good Works in a more ſpecial ſence.*

§. 7. *How Chriſtians of all ſorts may be rich in good Works.*

§. 8. *Works of Liberality and Mercy (or of Bodily Charity) peculiarly accounted laying up a Treaſure in Heaven.*

§. 9. *Charity to Men's Souls no leſs.*

Matter and a Method for Devotion ſuitable to the Fourth Chapter.

## CHAP. V.

Of a *Compoſed Eſtate* both of *Affairs* and *Mind.*

§. 1. *Diſentangling our ſelves from this World, a neceſſary Chriſtian Duty.*

§. 2. *The means thereto chiefly two, Putting our Affairs in order, and compoſing our Minds.*

§. 3. *Particular Directions hereto. Setting bounds to our deſires and deſigns of getting.*

§. 4. *Putting and keeping our Eſtates (or Accounts) in ſuch Order as to be juſt to all.*

§. 5. *Of Reſtitution.*

§. 6. *Of ſettling Children and Relations.*

§. 7. *Care in making and keeping a Will.*

§. 8. *Reconciliation to Mankind.*

§. 9. *Advice to Relations, Secrets,* &c.

§. 10. *Reſigning all to God, and laying aſide Sollicitude.*

§. 11. *The Concluſion of this part.*

Matter and a Method for Devotion ſuitable to the Fifth Chapter.

# Be ye also ready.

A

# METHOD

OF

Preparation for *Death* and *Judgment*.

*Queſt.* What Courſe People ſhould take to be *Ready for Heaven*? Or (which is much the ſame) to be *always prepared for Death and Judgment*.

## PART I. Chap. 1.

§. 1. *To be* Ready for Heaven, *and to be* always prepared for Death *and* Judgment *are the ſame.*

§. 2. *Yet* this Queſtion *contains* two Queſtions in it.

§. 3. *This Queſtion* no where expreſly put, *or* cloſely reſolved *in* Scripture, *and ſome probable* Reaſons why.

§. 4. *But Preparation, or being always ready for our Lord's Coming*, frequently enjoyned, *and its* Nature *ſet forth* at large *throughout the* whole Scripture.

§. 5. *The* Deſign of this Treatiſe, *and general Branches of the Preparation neceſſary.*

§. 6. This Work *muſt not* end *but with our* Lives; *yet is to be* begun *as* early *as may be.*

§. 1. THE Holy Ghoſt has aſſured us, That *there is no Work, nor Device, nor Wiſdom in the Grave*, Eccleſ. 9. 10. But that *after Death* only *comes Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. And, *in the place where the Tree falleth there it ſhall be*, Eccleſ. 11. 3. *That is*, ſay even the *Jewiſh* Maſters, *In the condition wherein Death finds us, God judgeth us:* Immediately then upon the departure of the Soul out of the Body, the ſtate of ſuch diſſolved Perſon is

is everlaſtingly and unchangeably determined, as to his future Weal or Wo; and *a Gulph fixed between* the Bleſſed and the Damned, ſo that *they who would paſs from* one to the other, *cannot*, Luke 16. 26. Neither is there any return from either. Wherefore after Death, there being no preparation poſſible to be made for Judgment, it muſt unavoidably follow, Preparation for Death and Preparation for Judgment include one another, or are much the ſame; and he that is provided for one, is alſo provided for the other; for whoſo is not prepared for Judgment before his Death, can never be provided for it; becauſe after Death no Work is to be done, no Proviſion can be made. And finally, Inaſmuch as whoſoever goes out of this World in an eſtate well provided for Death and Judgment, ſhall moſt certainly *reſt from their Labours, their Works following them*, Rev. 14. 13. receive at the laſt day that happy Sentence, *Come ye bleſſed Children of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*, *Matt.* 25. 34. Therefore whoſoever is prepared for Death and Judgment, is alſo

*ready*

*ready for Heaven.* So that all theſe Queſtions are moſt evidently in effect one and the ſame.

§. 2. Notwithſtanding the Caſe of Conſcience as above put (and 'tis indeed as weighty a Caſe of Conſcienoe as well can be put) does really contain in it two Queſtions. Firſt, *What ſhould a man do to prepare himſelf for Death?* Secondly, *What to maintain ſuch prepared Temper?* And accordingly muſt in the proceſs of this Diſcourſe receive in Juſtice a double Anſwer: For it is certain, many People may have been in ſome part of their days, for a while, both in their own ſenſe, and in reality, tolerably prepared for Death, who yet through ſundry intanglements in the World, and the general deceitfulneſs of Sin, may either totally or very dangerouſly relapſe from this ſtate; ſo dangerouſly without doubt, as that, though they may not perhaps, through the extraordinary Mercy of God to them, finally miſs of eternal Salvation, yet ſhall they forfeit all Comfort in a dying hour, and go out of this World, both in their own and others apprehenſions, as if bound

bound over and consigned to everlasting Torments; a most dreadful degree of Misery this most certainly! Which Consideration should awaken all good People always to maintain, as well as at first endeavour to attain such a prepared state as we are at present about to consult of.

§. 3. In the mean time, *both these* being *Questions*, whereto a full and distinct Resolution is one of the most *necessary* things imaginable, to People of whatsoever Rank, Sex or Age assignable, a man would wonder, that *neither our Lord Jesus* himself, *nor any of his Apostles*, have any where, (or in any one place of Holy Scripture) professedly and expresly delivered *an entire and close Answer* thereto; nay, that we find not so much as either of the Questions once directly and plainly put either to our Lord, or the Apostles, in all the Records of their Ministry.

Indeed we have a Question which *interpretatively* may seem at first *the same*, or somewhat *near it*, put by some relenting persons, who were in a way to their Conversion (or as one may say, under

the

the pangs of the New Birth) *Acts* 2. 37. *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* And yet more nearly by the penitent Jailor, *Acts* 16. 30. *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* But in both theſe Inſtances, the Perſons who make the Enquiry, expreſs no reſpect to Death or Judgment, nor ſeem at that time to have had immediately an eye on either: Thoſe in the firſt Inſtance, being at that time by St. *Peter*'s Sermon only under the firſt conviction of their Sin in crucifying the Lord of Life, ſeem meerly to have deſigned by their Queſtion, *What ſhall we do to get this ſo great Sin pardoned?* And in the ſecond Inſtance the poor Jailor having ſeen a Truth, which the Devil ſpoke againſt his Will, (*That the Apoſtles were the Servants of the moſt high God, and ſhewed Men the way of Salvation,* (v. 17.) Confirmed by a Miracle from Heaven, (*v.* 26.) Intended certainly by that his Queſtion, as he expreſſes it plainly enough, *What muſt I do to obtain* that Salvation you preach? As did alſo that Ruler, *Matth.* 19. 16. *Good Maſter, what good thing ſhall I do that I may inherit eternal Life?*

But

But none of these Questions, I say primarily or directly proceed upon preparation for Death, or express any immediate respect thereto. Rather do they inferr an apprehension in the Proposers of them, that they had a great part of their days then to come, and that they had not an aim at, or looked not in those Questions to their Death, but at, and to the whole remainder of their Life (at that time) before them; so that I may confidently say, these two Questions named, are no where in Scripture expressly put; nor therefore in any one place, altogether or intirely and distinctly answered.

One *Reason* of their *not being answered*, we may take to have been their *not being put*; But as to the *Reason* of their *not being put*, it is not easie to assign a better, than that perhaps *the Conceit of Peoples being able in a few days*, or (as some poor mistaken Wretches are apt to imagine) by a few hours Pains and Devotions, *to prepare themselves for Death*, and their appearance before the Seat of God's dreadful Judgment, *had not yet entred into the world*, or so generally

nerally ſeized and poſſeſſed mens minds, as now (God knows, and we poor Miniſters find) it has. This may be one probable cauſe indeed, for which we may conceive this Queſtion no where in Scripture to have been put.

And that our Lord Jeſus and his Apoſtles ſhould not of their own accord ſtart it, there is no wonder: For they well knowing and conſidering, that preparation for Death and Judgment needs to be the Work of a whole Life, and not of ſome ſmall part, or of the Fagg-end of it, (as we may ſo ſpeak) would never ſo far give occaſion to ſuch a Surmiſe, as profeſſedly and cloſely to put together all that is neceſſary to be ſaid to ſuch a Queſtion; but having in *general terms* firſt *deſcribed the Duty*, they *enjoyned its performance*, and laſtly *ſhewn the danger of its neglect*, they *left the Particulars* of the Preparation required in a ſort *ſcattered through the whole Scriptures*; as indeed the Duty it ſelf, in its full Latitude or Compaſs, runs through all the Parts and Duties of our Lives.

§. 4.

§. 4. In general, I ſay there are Terms which deſcribe, expreſs, or amply ſet forth to us the Duty of Preparation for Death and Judgment: There are many *Commands*, which directly enjoin, and ſuch *Warnings* given of the danger of neglecting it, as lay it moſt intimately home upon all Peoples Conſciences. Our Lord and his Apoſtles ſeldom or never treat of his *coming to Judgment*, but ſtill the Application, as we may call it, (or the practical part of their Diſcourſe) is of this nature. Thus, in the Whole four and five and twentieth Chapters of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, and in the parallel places of all the other Goſpels; in St. *Paul*'s firſt Epiſtle to the *Theſſalonians*, chap. 5. 4, 5, 6, &c. In St. *Peter*'s Second Epiſtle, *ch.* 3. 14, &c. In *Rev.* 3. 2, 3, &c. Chap. 16. 15. In all theſe, and other Places, the Chriſtian World is taught, That *the coming of our Lord will be as of a Thief in the night* (and truly it is ſo very oft by Death, as well as to Judgment) *unawares*, upon men *when they look not for him*; and therefore all are called upon, and conjured to be *always ready*; —— *To watch*; ——

*As*

*As faithful and wise Servants, to be ſtill doing their Lord's Work;* ——*To keep Oil in their Veſſels with their Lamps;* ——*To trim their Lamps;* ——*To have their Loins girded about, and their Lights burning, and to be as them that look for their Lord;* ——*To take heed to themſelves, leſt at any time their hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting or Drunkenneſs;* [κραιπάλη, even with the nauſeous Qualms of a full Stomach, or of the Night's Intemperance,] *or with the Cares of this world;* —— *To be as Children of the Light;* ——*Not to ſleep,* (that is, not to be idle, not to be ſecure, flattering themſelves in any Sin, or ſuffering Guilt to reſt upon their Conſciences) *as do others; but to watch unto Prayer;* ——*To be ſober, to be vigilant;* ——*To be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace, without ſpot or blemiſh;* ——*To ſtrengthen the things that are ready to die* (that is, quicken, exerciſe, and by exerciſing ripen and confirm (*ſtir up*) *the Grace of God in us;*) —— *To hold faſt till our Lord come;* —— *To keep our Garments,* leſt we be found naked, (that is, to be careſull

ſul we maintain a ſanctified and juſtified Eſtate, the Righteouſneſs of Faith, which is of God through Chriſt.) All theſe and ſundry like Expreſſions both declare and preſs the Duty, and awaken Conſcience thereto; but ſtill, either *in general* or in *figurative* Terms; and theſe alſo, as beforeſaid, *diſperſed* and in diſtant places.

§. 5. *The Deſign* therefore *of this Treatiſe* is to lay them all together, diſpoſing them into as eaſie and natural an Order as may be, and repreſenting or offering them in the plaineſt, but together, the moſt effectual manner we can; that ſo no ſort of people, who ſhall read, or hear read this poor, plain, practical Diſcourſe, may be ignorant either of the Matter or Obligation of their whole Duty in this great and moſt weighty Caſe.

And for the better comprehending the whole body of Directions to be given, which muſt have compaſs enough to anſwer the Conditions of people of all ſorts, or of each age, they may moſt fitly be *divided* by the *ſeveral Diſtances*, which by courſe of Nature, people

may conceive themſelves to ſtand in *from Death*; and ſo into three Claſſes or Stages, according to thoſe Diſtances: The *firſt* ſhall be of thoſe, who by courſe of Nature are at the longeſt diſtance, and who therefore now are perfectly to begin their Preparations: A Foundation muſt be laid, and a prepared State attained. The *ſecond* of the middle Stage, the Foundation muſt be ſecured, and a prepared State maintained: And the *third*, neareſt our End. For through the Vanity, and Self-flattery which attends all Men in this Life, at leaſt while Death is at any tolerable diſtance, (Men being apt to think they have time enough before them,) divers defects there will be in all, even the moſt prepared Chriſtians, when nearly approaching their End.

And theſe, perhaps, we ſhall moſt clearly ſee, when Death being to us, as it were, above the Horizon, and in ſight, diſpels thoſe Miſts, under which we have formerly lain, and frees our Judgments from that partiality, with which formerly we uſed to paſs Sentence of things and perſons, and eſpecially

eſpecially of our ſelves, our own Actions and Intereſts.

§. 6. The Practice then of thoſe Duties muſt not end, but with our Lives; and it will be likely to ſucceed the better, if it begin from the very preſent moment we read, or are warned of our concernment, becauſe none, who are capable to underſtand the Duty, can be too young for the practice of it.

They who would be ever ready to die, and appear (as they muſt unavoidably) at the Bar of Heaven, had need to *remember their Creator in the days of their Youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh in which they ſhall ſay, they have no pleaſure in them*, *Eccleſ.* 12. 1. They will have little heart to work, when they have little heart to live; when they would perhaps *be glad*, if poſſible (but poor Creatures! that is impoſſible) *not to be*, to be nothing; which is the Caſe of all unprepared and impenitent men at death.

But alas! Few of us have been ſo careful to begin as ſoon as it would have concerned us. Thoſe are like to *be happieſt who began ſooneſt*. As to ſuch who

have been ſo unhappy as to paſs the greateſt part of their Age, either in Vanity, propounding to themſelves no ſolid or certain end of Life, or in worldly buſineſs, and ſecular employs (for raiſing Eſtates, or Names, or Families) ſo that they have not minded Religion, or their Souls, theſe Perſons, as ſoon as ever they come to be ſenſible of their Errors, and touched with the guilt of having lived ſo long without any regard to the great buſineſs of Life, ſhould take the firſt time they can poſſibly, even the *very hour they firſt feel this concernment*, ſeriouſly to think of (and put themſelves into) a ſtate of proviſion for another world, unto which they do not know how near they are: To them the day is far gone already, and all the time they have left (eſpecially conſidering how much of it they muſt neceſſarily loſe) or (which is much the ſame) ſpend in mean employments and buſineſſes, which better not their Souls, which cannot be called living, is little enough to work out their Salvation, by perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God. *To day, whilſt it is called to day,*

*day*, let them make haſte, and delay not to attend their work, their great work, and (to them) *the one thing neceſſary.*

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[The Author hath not thought fit, upon Reaſons not needful now to be expreſs'd, but ſet down hereafter, (Part II. Chap. II.) to ſubjoyn to the ſeveral Chapters of this Treatiſe *ſtrict* and *formed Prayers*; but inſtead thereof, he hath choſen a Courſe, which, he hopes may more ſecure the actual making ſuch prepartions as he directs, than a meer Form of Prayer would have done, namely, ſuch an Order of Devotion as muſt needs engage, or employ the Heart of each Perſon that practiſes it.]

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## Matter, and a Method for *Devotions*, ſuitable to the Firſt *Chapter.*

Firſt, *Retire, get alone; and after ſome ſuch ſhort preparatory Prayer, with which thou commonly enterest thy Cloſet, or beginneſt thy Devotions there: being*

*now ſerious and compoſed*, examine Conſcience *as to the Caſe in hand; that is, put theſe Queſtions to thy ſelf*; Have I ever ſeriouſly thought of Death, Judgment, and the World to come?---What was the iſſue of thoſe Thoughts?--What Preparations thereupon have I made for my future eſtate?—— *Conſider of each Queſtion, and make true Anſwer in thine own Breaſt: Take time thereto.*

Secondly, *Meditate a while*; (*that is, think and conſider*) What a condition hadſt thou now been in, hadſt thou died ſuch as thou haſt lived? *Nay, perhaps*, ſhouldeſt thou die ſuch as now thou art? *So wicked, ſo guilty, ſo impenitent, and utterly unpardoned. Pauſe a while, and ponder this.*

Thirdly, *Apply thy ſelf to God accordingly in Prayer; that is,* (*being on thy knees, all this while*) *ſpeak to God as thou canſt, what thou thinkeſt. Tell him* (*though brokenly*) *thy Thoughts; and make freely to him thy Confeſſions.*

1. La-

1. Lamenting, *that thou haſt lived ſo long, to ſo little purpoſe; That thou haſt neglected ſo many warnings, and loſt ſo many Opportunities, as thy Conſcience accuſes thee of; that is, as thou remembreſt.*

2. Acknowledging God's Goodneſs, *in his ſparing thee ſo long, or ſuffering thee to live to this day; Giving thee the preſent warning, and touching thy heart with a ſenſe of thy Danger, awakening thee thus to Repentance, when he might have juſtly taken thee off, and damned thee. Spend thought and time in this acknowledgment.*

3. Petitioning, *or begging of him;*

I. *To enlighten thee (that is, make thee underſtand more fully) thy ſelf, and thy Condition; Him, and his Perfections; Thy own Duty and Concernment.*

II. *To affect thy heart throughly with this Knowledge.*

III. *To assist and enable thee to resolve particularly what is most fit and proper to thy Condition.*

IV. *To make thee able as well as willing to perform thy whole Duty in every particular.*

[Note *all these Advices may most easily be turned into Confession, Praise, or Prayer, as occasion requires, after this sort. Suppose I begin at* [1. Lamenting] *and say thus*, Lord, I lament that I have lived so long (*Thirty, Forty, Fifty, or Sixty Years, according as thy Age is*) to so little purpose, That I have neglected, &c.

I acknowledge thy Goodness in sparing me so long; In giving, &c.

I humbly beseech thee to enlighten me more fully, in the knowledge of my self and of Thee, &c. *And so in the rest.*

*Now this kind of praying, though it may seem to some imperfect and broken, to be only more thought, and sighs, and groans, than words; yet I conceive will be sure to engage and affect thy heart more, than reading*

*reading a very elegant and more complete Prayer would do; for it will put thy mind or heart to work of it ſelf; and it is to be conſidered, in ſecret Prayer,* Man is not to hear, *but* God; *who underſtands the workings of the heart, and delights more therein, though broken, than in fine Speech. I chuſe to leave it to devout Perſons diſcretion to enlarge, in their Prayers, more or leſs at pleaſure.*

*Laſtly, After ſuch Prayer, reſolve (while before God on thy knees) upon ſuch Particulars as thou thinkeſt in Conſcience neceſſary, or moſt proper to thy Condition, whichſoever of the three mentioned States it is. I mean, whether,* 1. *Thou art now firſt to begin thy Preparations for Death; or,* 2. *To continue and maintain them; or,* 3. *To perfect them. Conſider each, I ſay, and reſolve what thou truly judgeſt moſt proper. As to every of theſe three States, it may not be inconvenient to reſolve,*

1. *To*

1. *To* redeem all time poſſible (*that is to make uſe of all Opportunities and Advantages thou haſt*) *to prepare thyſelf for the other World.*

2. *As* not to delay, *ſo* neither to intermit, *or diſcontinue ſuch* Preparations; *but as far as thou art able to keep them ſtill on foot, and endeavour to perfect and ripen them.*

*And if thou ſee'ſt fit,* 3. *To* proſecute the Method of Preparation, *which is propoſed in this Book, or any better that thou haſt.* [*And ſo God proſper thy Work, and my Work, to us both.*]

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

### *The First Duty Advised to*; Religion in good earnest.

§. 1. *The* first Rank *of People to be prepared for Death and Judgment*, such who are perfectly to begin.

§. 2. *Provision for removing the Scruples of some.*

§. 3. *What Death and Judgment are.*

§. 4. *What generally makes Men afraid, unwilling and unfit to die.*

§. 5. *Such Practices as will answer the three Intentions proposed; will be all the Preparation necessary for Persons within this Period.*

§. 6. *The* first Duty *to be practised*; Giving the mind to Religion in good earnest.

§. 7. *This much wanting in the Generality.*

§. 8. *What is the meaning of giving a Man's Mind to Religion.*
§. 9. *Using ones self to think, a proper Means to make the Mind serious in Religion.*
§ 10. *A particular Train of Thoughts to this purpose.*
§. 11. *The whole Evidence summed up, and this Head concluded.*

§. 1. TO enter then upon our first Stage, namely, An Account of such Particulars in order to being prepared for Death, which concern those who are *quite to begin* this Work.

Of these, we may reckon *two sorts*: First, *Licentious*, *loose*, *ungodly People*, be they young or old; who if they have thought at any time of Death, Judgment, or another World, it has been in a sort against their wills; at least they have generally thrust such thoughts out of their Minds, and *put far from them the evil day*, so that Repentance, Turning to God, and all good Conscience are strangers to them: These People sometimes Judgment overtakes in this Life, and they are likely to be carried off

off by Accidents, by violent means, or perhaps by the Hand of Juſtice, and then in a great deal of confuſion of Mind, they think of preparing for Death. A ſecond ſort there are, *more orderly perſons*, who live at the common rate of People amongſt us, *profeſſing* their *Country Religion*, but *in good earneſt minding little* of any Religion to the purpoſe. They perhaps ſometimes at Sermons, or by hearing or reading Holy Scriptures, or good Books, have been prick'd in Conſcience, and thought of repenting, and in ſuch moods have prayed to God to forgive their Sins, and reſolved to lead new Lives, but preſently the *Cares of this world, and the Deceitfulneſs of Riches, and the Luſts of other things*, Mark 4. 19. entring, and ſeizing their hearts, have daſh'd thoſe beginnings, and blaſted any farther ſucceſs of Grace; and although there may be ſome knowledge and ſenſe of Duty remaining in them to work upon, yet they are perfectly to begin all through Repentance, and ſo all Preparation for Death. Now even theſe, as well as the former, though haply they may not as the

the others, come under the Lash of the Law to die by publick Justice, yet are with them and all men *obnoxious to Epidemical*, or *Acute Diseases*, Plague, Fevers, Fluxes, &c. to *VVars*, and such *overflowing Scourges*, which sometimes sweep away the greatest part of a Nation; to *private Accidents*, such as Falls, Bruises, breaking of Bones, Wounds, loss of Blood, and a hundred like Occurrences, by which they may suddenly be brought to the Gates, or into the Chambers of Death; and, in these and like Cases, it will be necessary for them to begin and make up what *present preparation* they can for Death, and that as *speedily* as may be. If they survive their danger, they may mend or ripen their Preparations; if they do not, the Question is, What can be done on a sudden, or in a few Months, or Weeks, to put such People in a likelihood *of Salvation*, that is, in a state any ways tolerably prepared for Death and Judgment? I said, *in a few Months or VVeeks*; for as to a preparation to be made in a *few Days* (God knows, some poor People think of a few *Hours*), I do not pretend

tend to any Methods or Directions touching ſuch a Preparation; the thing is, if not impoſſible, yet not ordinarily to be effected. Now theſe Perſons, perhaps many of them, according to courſe of Nature, may be at a long diſtance from the Grave; yet ſith they know not how ſoon they may drop or be hurried thither, it is the Intereſt and Duty of them, and of all, to make up the beſt preparation for Death they can even for the preſent, leſt they ſhould be ſurprized and taken totally unprepared. Nor will this part be only uſefull to ſuch; for, though all may not be perfectly to begin, yet the *Counſels* to be given to *Beginners*, may *ſupply ſome Defects* in *riper years* of common Rank. The certainty of Death once, and the uncertainty of the time when (how ſoon, or by what means) makes as inſtant, ſudden, and perfect preparation for Death as may be neceſſary even to all whatſoever. Never will any wiſe man think he can begin his Preparations too ſoon, and make them too perfect; nor is there any thing more common than mens bitter lamenting, and (alas!) finding themſelves to have

all

all cauſe to lament, that they begun too late, or have been too ſlighty and ſuperficial in them. But when did we ever ſee or hear any repent, or who can be preſumed ever to have had cauſe to repent that they were too early, or too mature and careful herein?

Now that our way may be clear, I think fit to remove one ſtumbling Block.

§. 2. It is not impoſſible, but that to ſome Beginners, (who may be grave Perſons, exerciſed in Science and Buſineſs, more conſiderative, thoughtful, and of more comprehenſive heads, and ſo ſeeing further than others) it is not impoſſible, I ſay, but to ſuch this work at firſt may ſeem *ſo long*, and to conſiſt of ſo *great variety* of *Parts* (ſo many things neceſſary to being duly prepared for Death and the Tribunal of an all-ſeeing God) as that they may think none can be certain he knows, or any that he teaches, all points neceſſary in this caſe. Eſpecially, it having been above confeſſed, that the Preſcriptions or Directions proper hereto, are no where in Scripture put all together, but are di-

verſly

verſly ſcattered almoſt through the Holy Canon: This Suſpicion I have found in ſome. Now for delivering our ſelves from under this Scruple, and for ſatisfying our Minds touching the *ſufficiency of the Advices* which ſhall hereafter be given, let us in the beginning *enquire what Death is*, and *what Judgment*: And then *what ſhould make us any more unwilling* or *loath to die*, than we are at night, when weary, after the Buſineſs of the day, to go to reſt; or, than a Day-Labourer would be in the Evening to receive his Wages, and be diſmiſs'd. Which things when we have ſeen, we ſhall ſoon diſcern what we have to deliver our ſelves from, and what to provide, and conſequently all that can be neceſſary or profitable for us, according to our condition, to do, in order to an happy end.

§. 3. *Firſt* then, let us endeavour, as intimately as we can, to ſee what Death is; and at a diſtance narrowly look this *Gorgon*, or (to uſe a Scripture-term) *the King of Terrors* in the face, that from henceforth we may be able calmly

to think of him, and live prepared to encounter him.

The *Heathens* of old generally looked upon *Death* as a *Deſtruction of the whole Man*, and conceived the Soul either in the ſame inſtant with the Body to die, or at leaſt, in ſome time to be diſſipated and vaniſh. And even thoſe of them who taught the *Immortality of the Soul*, rather held it as the more *probable Conjecture* of the two, than as a certain Truth. But the Holy Ghoſt has taught us Chriſtians better. *The Duſt indeed returns to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit ſhall return unto God who gave it*, Eccl. 12. 7. And, *All live unto him*, Luke 20. 38. Nay, not only does the Soul live *on*, when the Body falls, but even the Body it ſelf ſhall at the laſt day, by the Almighty hand of God be raiſed again. Both *Dry Bones*, and the very Duſt of Bones *ſhall live again*, Ezek. 37. And *there ſhall be a Reſurrection of the dead, both of the Juſt and of the Unjuſt*, Act. 24. 15. Wherefore if theſe things be true, as no Chriſtian queſtions, Death can be nothing

*Ultra enim ut progrediar, quam ut veriſimilia videam non habeo.* Cic. Tuſc. Qu. Li.

nothing but a *Temporary Separation of the Soul from the Body.* There may be indeed, and in caſe of natural Deaths commonly there are, ſome foregoing pains, which we commonly call the *Pangs of Death*; but theſe are rather the moſt uneaſie part of Life, than ingredients or parts of Death. And when the Paroxiſm (or ſtrength of the Pain) has once conquered Nature, the inſtant of Death is certainly no more painful than it is to fall aſleep. Death puts an end to thoſe Pains, and, at leaſt for the ſake of being rid of them, is to be wiſh'd for rather than dreaded. Beſides, both Death it ſelf and thoſe its Harbingers, or foregoing pains, in ordinary Caſes, are neceſſary and unavoidable to all Men; therefore it is moſt unreaſonable and unworthy of conſidering Perſons to fear them; rather does it become and concern us, to prepare to bear them as Chriſtianity directs, and with as much eaſe, that is, as much patience as we can. So that in truth, upon the whole, it is more *that which is conceived to follow Death*, which *makes* people *fear Death*, than its own Nature.

Of its *followers*, the closeſt, moſt immediate, and inſeparable one, is *Judgment*. Now *that Judgment*, which *immediately follows Death*, is no doubt chiefly, if not only, the determining and *aſcertaining each dying perſons future Condition*: Whatſoever the Dreadful Pomp and Appearance of our Lord's Second Coming, and the Conflagration of the World has in it, that is not to take place till the laſt day: and I conceive it has been ſcarce ever found, that dying perſons have been appall'd, or diſmay'd, at the apprehenſions of that. So that, as before ſaid, that which muſt make Men afraid, or unwilling to die, muſt be ſomething which is apprehended, attended to or in Men's eye, as immediately following Death.

§. 4. Now the Summ of all the troubleſome Conſequents of Death, muſt either be *Evils to our ſelves*, or *to others*, ſome way *related to*, or depending on us. And the Evils which can befall us, muſt affect either our *perſons* in the other World; of which Nature can be nothing but either *Loſs*, or *Pain*; or our *Names* and *Memories*, which may ſurvive us

us in this World. And in caſe we be afraid or unfit to die, ſome or more of theſe we ſhall find and muſt confeſs if we will be true to our ſelves, to be the genuine Reaſons. Either firſt we apprehend by Death we ſhall *loſe* ſome Happineſs, we are here poſſeſs'd and perhaps too fond of; or we fear by Death ſome Evil, we are yet free from; or laſtly, we have *ſome Obligations* or Ties upon us to ſome things or perſons in this World, which we would not have yet looſed, or from which we cannot with Honour yet get free. We are entangled with this World, either in affection, or beſides, in buſineſs (of our own or others) from which we judge it highly inconvenient for us yet to be diſmiſs'd.

Now let us conſider each of theſe. As to the firſt: *Perfect Happineſs* is all we can wiſh: But Perfect Happineſs no Man can ſay he is, or can be poſſeſt of on Earth; only he has here ſome Enjoyments, which he fanſies to be pretty Good, or little inſtances of Happineſs, and he is in hopes ſometimes of ſome more; now theſe Death will bereave him of: But if a Man could obtain a

perfect Happiness *by, or after Death*, it were reasonable to desire the exchange; for then he would have all he could wish, and by Death become Gainer. Now this we must find a way to do, if we will sufficiently prepare a Man for Death. Again, as to the state of Men in the other world, there never was, nor is, nor can be any thing ever thought of terrible after Death but *Judgment*, and the *punishment of those Sins* which we have committed in this life, or (to speak more properly perhaps according to the opinion of some) the disorders of mind, which these Sins have brought upon us, being heightened and continued. But it is plain, many punishments of our Sins, many disorders and inquietudes thence, we meet with, and shall lie under here, more or less, as long as we live. If therefore *by, or after Death*, we can be secure of a *perfect release from all these punishments*, and removal of all possible disorders and evils, we should by such security be provided against all we could fear by, or after Death. Now this also is to be done. There remains therefore nothing now

to

to render a Man ready as well as willing to die, but *diſentangling* himſelf from this World.

§. 5. So that in ſumm, we have *three Intentions* before us, to which all the Advices (at leaſt in this Period) to be given, are to be directed: and if theſe three be by any means attained, there is no queſtion but ſuch perſons who have attained them are prepared for Death. For more evils or inconveniencies by Death, than thoſe mentioned, we cannot conceive of; and therefore means ſufficient to remove theſe, muſt be ſufficient to prepare us for Death. And let a Man ſtand never ſo near the top of the Hill, how large a proſpect ſoever he has to the Gulph he is to paſs, he will find himſelf highly concerned, as to theſe three general Intentions.

Firſt he is to *provide himſelf a Happineſs to go to in the other World.* For a Man cannot be in any meaſure prepared to part hence, who has no foreſight of, nor can promiſe to himſelf, any good to be enjoyed hereafter.

Secondly, He muſt *provide againſt whatever he can fear in another World.*

For a Man cannot be happy where his Fears remain. And in the former Particular we have admitted, He who is prepared for Death must be provided of Happiness in the other World; therefore also provided against what he may fear there.

Thirdly, He is to *disentangle himself from this World*, and all secular Concerns, that he may be able easily to part hence whensoever the appointed hour shall come. For it is certainly a great misery to be torn hence, instead of quietly and willingly yielding up all.

These three Intentions whoso has obtained, is as well provided for Death, as at a distance a Man can be well conceived to be; nor is it easie to comprehend, at least I must confess I do not see, what can be in those of this Order required more. But for attaining these, there are sundry Counsels to be taken, and much Work to be done.

§. 6. And first, above all things, such persons are to *bend their minds to Religion in good Earnest*, and really to *make that their Business*. Religion, of all Doctrines in the World, alone can pretend

tend to bring a Man to the knowledge of his true Happineſs. And of all Religions none does that, but the Chriſtian. Our Lord Jeſus has pronounc'd it, *I am the Way, the Truth and the Light*; that is, I alone have effectually brought to Light the true way to Life, 2 *Tim.* 1. 10. *He hath aboliſhed Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel.* Whoſoever therefore thou art that wouldſt provide to thy ſelf a Happineſs in another World, (which indeed is the only true Happineſs, all elſe is but Spectres, meer Ghoſts and Apparitions of Happineſs) reſolve on being Religious in good Earneſt, and give thy mind thereto.

§. 7. This the *generality*, even of them which *profeſs Religion, do not do.* Religion, God help us, is taken up by moſt of us as other Faſhions of the Countrey are, meerly of courſe, and in compliance with the multitude; and if Men perform ſome outward Exerciſes thereof (in the mean time not living very extravagantly bad) they are look'd upon by their Neighbours as Religious Men. And as long as they do not believe contrary to the

the Doctrines of Chriſtianity, but look upon them as things which perhaps may be true, and have been taken for Truths never doubted of time out of mind, they themſelves eſteem themſelves to have a very tolerable Faith; and then, a few cuſtomary Formalities obſerved, will eaſily paſs, in their favourable Judgment of themſelves, for a Chriſtian Practice. And thus, alas, we have many a current Chriſtian without real Chriſtianity; a religious Multitude without a grain of true Religion. For Chriſtianity, or *True Religion*, conſiſts in a *changed heart* and a *changed life*: But the generality of people riſe not hereto; much leſs contents them. As to the getting into their hearts a ſolid and rational Perſuaſion of the being of a God, and of a World to come; as to affecting themſelves with a ſenſe of Sin, and putting themſelves into a ſtate of Pardon through the Blood of Chriſt, and then ſettling and maintaining in themſelves a Love and Fear of God, Reſolutions and Endeavours of Juſtice, Charity, Purity and Humility; and finally keeping to this Temper; theſe are things, which

which either they never thought of, or have put off the concerning themſelves with them, till they have done what they account the buſineſs of Life, that is gotten a fair Eſtate, and in the end of their days may, as they hope, time enough have leiſure and eaſe to conſider of theſe Matters, and ſettle them to their hearts deſire. This, as far as can be judged by ordinary Fruits, is the ſtate and pitch of Religion with the Multitude: Nay there are many, touching whom it is a high degree of Charity to think even thus much. Now he who will be prepared for Death and Judgment, muſt be religious at another rate.

§. 8. He muſt, firſt, look upon Religion, not meerly as a thing *probable*, or which perhaps may be ſo as it is pretended, a *poſſible Truth*; but as indeed it is, *actually the greateſt Truth*, and *Matter of moſt preſſing Concernment* in the World. Whether this Imployment, Trade and Way of Life, or whether that, be the ſureſt and ſpeedieſt Method for me to get an Eſtate, is uncertain: They are both probable, and perhaps there

there may be a third or fourth way as probable. And whether I ever be rich or no, the Matter is not of the greateſt moment. *Man's Life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he doth poſſeſs*; many Men live happily, who have but from hand to mouth. But whether I be ſaved or damned, whether I be everlaſtingly bleſſed, or everlaſtingly tormented with the Devil and his Angels; this is a Matter of Concernment indeed. And then, that *there is not Salvation in any other*, but in the Crucified Jeſus, nor *any other name given under Heaven amongſt men whereby we muſt be ſaved.* (No Bleſſedneſs to be had but by true Religion) is a thing moſt certainly true; and 'tis moſt vain to think of any other courſe, but this which the Goſpel has laid down.

Now, to the end that a Man may be truly convinced of thus much, he muſt give his mind, *firſt*, to *underſtand the Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion* (that is, in plain Terms, the Articles of our Chriſtian Faith) he muſt read, if he be able, honeſt and eaſie Expoſitions of them,

them, having before treaſured up in his memory the Articles of Belief, and Rules of Life; and if he be not able to read, he muſt diligently hear, enquire particularly, of his Miniſter and Friends, touching any thing he underſtands not, which he conceives neceſſary to Salvation: He muſt not reſt, till he has ſatisfied himſelf in ſome plain Notion or Conception of that whereof he is ignorant.

This being done, in the next place he muſt *attend unto the Reaſons and Evidences*, which there are of the *Truth of ſuch Doctrines*. Why ſhould I believe there is a God, and he Almighty, and the Maker of all things ſeen and unſeen? My Reaſon (if I will but take the pains to think) tells me it muſt neceſſarily be ſo. For no Man, nor all Men together, could ever make this World, the viſible Heaven and Earth, the Sun and Moon and Stars, and put them all into that orderly motion, in which they circle, riſing, moving, ſetting, then hidden to us, but enlightening and chearing others. Nor can any ſtop the Heavens from moving, nor

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ſtir the Earth, or make it bring forth otherwiſe than in ſeaſon. All the Powers we know cannot alter Spring or Harveſt, Summer or Winter: They cannot make the Sun riſe ſooner, or ſet later. Therefore ſome *Being* of greater, and indeed *of infinite Power*, there muſt be; that is, the *Almighty God muſt have made, and doth uphold and govern Heaven and Earth, and all therein.*

Again, *Holy Scripture* gives Account and *farther Proof* of all theſe things. There I read, or thence I may hear the whole *Hiſtory of the Creation*; how all and every of theſe things were made, and how they have been governed ever ſince, and what God made them for, and what he will do with them: Theſe, and the like Evidences of the Truths of Religion muſt ſuch perſon ſearch into; and when he has got any degree of ſatisfaction, carefully treaſure up in his Mind (or Memory) what gave him that ſatisfaction, that he may be able to have recourſe thereto at any time to re-inforce Aſſent, and by virtue of what he believes, to ſatisfie and aſ-

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ſure himſelf of other Truths, the perſwaſion of which he yet wants.

And thus *underſtanding*, and *being perſwaded* of the ſeveral Particulars of Religion, it remains ſuch Perſon go on *conſcientiouſly to practiſe* what he knows and believes. Having learn'd, and being convinc'd, that there is a God, who made, upholds and governs the World, he will ſoon believe that *this God*, as other Governors, *has given* to his Subjects, *a Law*, and that what we call the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, eſpecially as expounded and improved by our Saviour, is that Law; and that thereby, as our ſame Lord has taught us, all Men ſhall be judged. Upon this, ſuppoſing ſuch cordial Belief of all has been directed unto, it will follow through the Grace of God, that the man will *live in the fear of God*, *withſtand Temptations*, *break himſelf of evil Cuſtoms*, &c. as one who ſhall be judged by this moſt Spiritual Law.

And that he may ſo do, as taught, he will daily, and earneſtly (with all his heart) *pray* to God; he will ſeriouſly, with real devotion and care, uſe all other

ther Means, *attend Sacraments, wait on the Miniſtry of the Word*, conſcientiouſly *apply* all he learns for his advance in Grace, and daily *watching* over himſelf, *endeavour to grow better and wiſer.*

Summarily, and in plain terms, this is, I ſay, *being in good earneſt, and ſerious in Religion*, for People to *give their hearts* to the *underſtanding, believing, and practiſing* the Chriſtian Doctrine and Precepts, and to *perſeverance and growth* in ſuch Practice: Or, more briefly, as ſaid, to *ſtudy conſtantly to be every day wiſer and better God-wards.* And thoſe who really will not ſet themſelves thus to do, muſt never think of being provided for another World. Nothing will fit a man for that without ſuch general Religious Care.

§. 9. Now to bring men thus to give their minds in good earneſt to Religion, I can think of no other, at leaſt no ſhorter or properer way than to deſire and conjure all ſorts of People to accuſtom themſelves to *retire within themſelves*, and *think that they have Souls*, or an unſeen part. It is moſt certain the greateſt number

number of Mankind periſh for want of conſideration, and not *exerciſing* of thoſe Faculties they have above Brutes. By our *Bodies*, we are Fleſh and Blood, *equal* in a ſort to *the Beaſts that periſh*; by our *Souls*, we are a part of the unſeen, and indeed of the inviſible World; we are Minds, or Underſtanding, reaſoning Beings, *nearly equalled to Angels*, either good or bad ones. Now the *Bane of moſt People is*, that the Brute, or *Beaſt-part alone lives*, acts and governs; but the *Angel-part*, as it were, *ſleeps*, is oppreſs'd, drown'd, or buried. And in the degree that this befalls men, they are more or leſs defective in Religion. Some men, who altogether follow their fleſhly Deſires, have no Religion at all; others, who govern them according to Rules of Civility, have perhaps the outward Mode (or Faſhion) of their Country-Religion: So that to bring men, I ſay, to be in good earneſt, and ſerious in Religion, I know nothing more likely to be effectual than perſwading them to think, to converſe more with themſelves, and by *uſing their Minds* to bring themſelves to *feel that they have them*,

that there are in them Souls, or a ſpiritual, unſeen, active Part. This, if they were well ſenſible of, they would conclude, that as they have an unſeen part, ſo there may be *an unſeen world*, according as they are told there is; and that as this their unſeen part is truly the Man, and the moſt excellent part of them, ſo the unſeen world is the moſt real, and of greateſt worth and moment. That therefore theſe Souls of theirs ſhould be look'd after, and ſome proviſion made for them againſt they come to be ſtripp'd of their Bodies, and to paſs naked into the World of Spirits. Further, by this means they would find, that it is their Bodies that eat, and drink, and ſleep, and are pleaſed and ſatisfied therewith; and that when they have no Bodies, they ſhall do none of theſe: That therefore there muſt be otherguiſe ſatisfaction look'd after for their Souls. In a word, I can hardly believe that a thinking perſon can fail in the End, to arrive at being ſerious in Religion; eſpecially if he ſet out with any ſober and certain Principles; one Thought will lead on another, till by the Grace of God,

God, ſome divine Truth or other pierce or fix in his Heart, and make way for the final Victory of Faith.

§. 10. We will take a further and more diſtinct inſtance of the Caſe in a *particular Train of Thoughts.* Suppoſe we then a man by himſelf, and either upon the importunity of Miniſters, frequently rating People into ſeriouſneſs, or upon the inſtigations of his own Conſcience, ſome way awakened by God's ſecret Grace, (which one time or other is wanting to none under the Goſpel: ſuppoſe we, I ſay, ſuch a perſon) beginning to conſider, whether there be any real neceſſity for him to trouble himſelf any further with Religion, than to be in the general faſhion of the Country; and having caſt away many things that have been urged upon him, either as falſe, or as uncertain, or of little moment, at length to bethink himſelf.

1. Though all the other Particulars uſually inculcated to perſuade me to ſeriouſneſs in Religion, ſhould be falſe, and meerly little Arts and Inventions to awe me; yet this is certain, *die I muſt*, ſooner or later. Not one eſcapes

this perpetual Law: Thoſe who have thought themſelves moſt exempted from the common Fate of all, have notwithſtanding at length, whether they would believe it or no, felt it, and yielded thereto. Perhaps there may have been ſome, whom we have known or heard of in the World, ſo fond as to ſay, ſuch an one died meerly for want; ſuch a one by fraud; ſuch a one by the neglect or miſtake of his Phyſician; ſuch a one by his own ignorance or wilfulneſs: But I have Wealth enough, that I cannot want what is neceſſary to preſerve me; Knowledge enough timely to diſcover any decay in me, and to prevent its prevalence (or growing too much upon me.) Temper enough to ſecure or deliver my ſelf from many incurable Evils, which others run into; and Caution enough to keep my ſelf out of Violence or Harm's way, and therefore I ſhall not die: And yet this very perſon perhaps we know now to lie in his Grave. We may have obſerved others to fanſie to themſelves a kind of Immortality by piece-meal. This day they think they ſhall not die to morrow; and when to morrow

morrow comes, they cannot believe they ſhall die the next day; and when that is come, they are ſtill perſuaded they ſhall ſee another Sun; yet have we ſeen even theſe Men's Sun ſet, and their laſt day come. It is true then, that as thoſe miſtaken, fond ſelf-flatterers have died, ſo muſt I, moſt certainly, moſt unavoidably die.

2. And, I find (Secondly) by Obſervation of Multitudes, whom I have ſeen or heard of dying, that it is alſo a great Truth which I have been told, that *Men's Thoughts, when dying, touching things of Life* (namely touching Wealth, Pleaſures, Mirth, *&c.*) nay generally touching all the Actions and States of Men, *prove much different from what they are, in the gaiety and jollity of their days.* Therein indeed they laugh at, and reproach, ſober, devout, and mortified Men; but upon their Death-beds they wiſh themſelves in their Condition. Perhaps while in the way of Gain and Buſineſs, Men admire the ſplendor and value of Gold, and think a Bag of it one of the moſt Sovereign Goods in the World. They

would venture Credit and Conſcience, and even Life, to come by it. But give Gold to any of thoſe, when dying, and he'll cry out, Why do you torment me? Alas! that has been my Ruine. Oh! that I could have but ſome eaſe of Conſcience! Oh! that I had but reaſon to hope God would have mercy upon me! Oh! that I had minded Godlineſs as much as I have done Gain! my Condition now had been otherwiſe. Thus have we known it with people far (in humane Eſteem) from being irreligious. Yea, take the lewdeſt and moſt debauch'd perſons, whom in their health, nothing but Revelling, and Luſt, and Hectoring and Profaneneſs would down with, who would curſe you for the leaſt good Advice you gave them, or even for beſeeching God to have Mercy upon them: Come to theſe Men, when by God and a Diſeaſe, or by the Magiſtrate and Proceedings at Law, under the Sentence of Death, and have they the ſame ſenſe of their Bottles, and Frolicks, and Minions and mad Company? Will they brave it as formerly? Ask them which of the two you ſhall call to them,

a pack

a pack of merry Boys and Hectors, or a Miniſter, and which will they chuſe? Will Oaths and Damme's, and Confound me Body and Soul, or even their lewd Songs, or but merry Stories be Muſick now in their ears? Far enough from it; Now nothing but the Prayers of all good people is called for; but too late for the moſt part, God knows. Thus much generally all Men are able to obſerve. And it is a certain Truth, if Men have their Senſes, and are of ſound memory and reaſon, *Conſcience is more awake*, and ſpeaks louder, and more impartially, *when they are in ſight of death than ever.* They that choak'd and oppreſs'd it before, hear and feel it then, whether they will or no. And this I cannot but acknowledge to be a conſtant, at leaſt a general Truth.

3. Nay, further, Thirdly, *Even at preſent* do I not find within my own Breaſt, and in my calm hours and true ſenſe of things, *a great difference*, as well *between good and evil Actions*, as the *Effects and Products* thereof? Is Money unjuſtly gotten, by Cozenage, or Lying, or Diſſembling (not to ſay

worſe) ſo comfortably laid up, as that which is the reward of my honeſt Pains and Induſtry? Or would I be as content to leave my Son an Eſtate, which I forced as out of the Fire, by Oppreſſion, grinding the face of the Poor, Falſeneſs, Subornations, *&c.* as one, which my Anceſtors fairly left me, or my own Frugality and honeſt Diligence acquired. And ſo in a thouſand other Caſes, Is not the like difference apparent? Is Riot and Roaring, and beaſtly proſtituting my own and others Honour, ſo amiable, and yielding as much eaſe to the mind, as Sobriety, Gravity, and Purity? Nay even in others; Is it as comfortable to me to hear Men lie, and then ſwear to prove their Lies; to hear them curſe and damn, or perhaps but even rail and rant at one another; as to be entertained with grave or wiſe Diſcourſe, or over-hear devout people aſſembled at their Prayers in the Fear of God, and with a decent Concord?

Further, beſides the inward Advantage of being vertuous and religious, do I not ſee daily, that Men by *Vertue and Religion*

*Religion preſerve* themſelves *from a thouſand Inconveniencies*, which others run into. They keep (and encreaſe perhaps) their Eſtates, their Credit, their Eaſe, their Quiet, their Health, the Love of their Neighbours, and a good Intereſt in their Countrey, with many more Felicities; whereas others by contrary practices forfeit all: So that a Man cannot but be ſenſible (ſuppoſing him thus to go on thinking and conſidering with himſelf) that Vertue and Religion give Men great advantage of others, not only when going out of the World, but even in the ſtrength and vigor of their age; and that as well in regard of inward Peace, liking and approving or being at eaſe with themſelves, as in many worldly reſpects.

4. Now *will an outward Demureneſs and Hypocriſie*, a pretending that Religion or Vertue which Men have not, *do all this*? (And truly Profeſſors of Religion, who are not religious in good Earneſt, are no better than demure Hypocrites.) Will I ſay deceiving the World, and perhaps themſelves too, with a pretence to that Integrity that they

they have not, administer Comfort to Men, when dying, or Content and Peace while in Life, at a distance from Death? Let me seriously consider of this, and there will nothing appear more plain to me, nor shall I be more sensible of any thing in the World, than that such Temper, as described, would be a dying Torment to me, a Hell before-hand, and that it is really a reproach to me, in my own sense of things at present, if I am such; I say, if I be guilty of it, *my heart* even now *reproaches me* for it.

5. And after all these Thoughts, thus in a train and dependance upon one another, run through; after such a thread of Reason spun by my Soul, *can I believe this Soul of mine is equal to that whereby Beasts live?* Is it no nobler, of no longer duration, than the Spirit of a Dog, or of a Swine, or of such vile Creatures? Am I able to conceive, think, and put together all these things to no purpose? And *have I the sense and prospect of a Life to come, an earnest desire too of Immortality*, and all this *in vain*? Let me see; Is it so as

to

to my other Faculties? Has God given me Eyes to ſee, and yet is there neither Light nor Colours? Has he given me Ears to hear, and are there no ſounds? Has he given me a Mouth, and Palate, and provided a Stomach for reception of Meat, and put an Appetite into it, and parts and powers for digeſting my Meat, yet are there no kinds of Food? Nothing fit to be taſted, eaten, digeſted? Has he given me a Tongue to ſpeak, and an Underſtanding to frame Thoughts, and direct that Tongue to utter them, and are there no people in the World for me to converſe with? It is plain to me that *none of my other Faculties are in vain*: Therefore, *Neither* was I endued with the *Apprehenſion*, *Senſe*, and *Appetite after another Life in vain*, but another Life after this there is. My Conceptions and Deſires of Immortality were no more put into me in vain, than my Senſes, or natural Appetites. That is, there is an Immortal State; that is, my Soul is Immortal, or capable of Immortality. We ſee now whither we are come meerly by a little thinking.

§. 11. Let

§. 11. Let us then put all this together, and ſee what will be the Reſult: Whether it be tolerable or no, to be as vain and formal, and as meer Actors in Religion, as the World of Profeſſors of it are? Or whether we are not moſt highly concerned to be herein, more than in any other practices in the World, or in any other part of Life, moſt ſincere, ſerious and in good Earneſt. The Summ is;

*I muſt die.*

Though I *choak* and *oppreſs Conſcience*, and put tricks upon my ſelf to gloſs over foul Actions at preſent, *I ſhall not be able* to do ſo long, at leaſt not *at Death.*

Nay even now *at preſent I have much ado to make many things palatable*, which yet in practice I ſwallow; ſo that I muſt account that *at my Death*, if I am then in my Senſes, *they'll ſting me* with a witneſs, and in all probability not only in my departing, but *eternally* in that Immortal State.

For *I cannot perſuade my ſelf but there is a Life after this:* I have ſo many Evidences of it within my ſelf.

And

And *it is not an outſide Demureneſs*, or ſhadow of Religion, which *will bear me out, or ſtand me in ſtead at Death and Judgment.* Then the Vizor will fall off. Therefore it is my Concernment above all things, to be early ſerious in Religion. For I am ſenſible none die comfortably but vertuous Men: None elſe, when dying, have either *eaſe, as to what is paſt*, or a *comfortable proſpect of what is to come.* So that the Concluſion of all is, If I will follow what in my own ſenſe of things (and herein all good and wiſe Men, all that are not beſide themſelves, mad or vicious, agree with me) I muſt ſet my ſelf to be ſerious in, and moſt intent upon Religion. And this is the firſt ſtep of Preparation for Death and Judgment in our Stage.

The Second will be, That we immediately go upon the *reconciling our ſelves to God*, and endeavour to make our Peace with him; of which in the next Chapter.

## Matter and a Method for Devotions ſuitable to the Second Chapter.

*BEing retired ſeriouſly; Firſt*, Examine Conſcience, *How thou haſt ſtood affected and concerned hitherto in Matter of Religion?*

1. Haſt thou concerned thy ſelf any more in it, *or about it*, than in other Cuſtoms *and Uſages* of thy Countrey?

2. *In caſe thou haſt, with more outward Concernment than the generality of people, eſpouſed the Profeſſion of Religion, yet as to the* Vertue it ſelf, *Religion in the Soul*; (1.) Is thy heart furniſhed with ſound Knowledge? *Haſt thou reaſonable Conceptions of the Doctrine and Precepts of Chriſtianity: And*, (2.) Art thou ſeriouſly in thy heart perſuaded that Chriſtian Religion is true, *and the*

*the* alone ſure way to Happineſs? *Or elſe on the contrary, Art thou a meer, formal, external Profeſſor, pretending to be zealous in this or that way; but deſigning by ſuch pretence only other ends, than thoſe of thy Soul in an unſeen World. Conſider the Matter ſeriouſly: For a multitude of meer worldly Bigots (of zealous outward Profeſſors) are there in our World, who both with themſelves and others paſs for religious Men.*

Or, 3. *Though thou haſt been through the Grace of God enlightened, and art in ſome meaſure knowing and perſwaded in thy Conſcience, of the Truth of Religion; yet is it not thy Caſe (as it is many other religious people's) that* thou art, *as to Religion,* really lukewarm, in love with the World and things that are ſeen? *So that thou haſt been very* negligent in an holy, heavenly, conſcientious Practice; *and, by reaſon of this Indifferency, can'ſt ſcarce ſay, thou haſt*

*been*

*been yet religious in good earneſt. Deal honeſtly with thy ſelf in ſifting out the Truth, as near as able; It will be thine own another day.*

*Secondly, After this Search, if thou findeſt thy* Condition *to be any of theſe* three, *pauſe a while, and* conſider particularly the guilt and ſinfulneſs of it, *whichſoever of the three it prove.*

*As to the* Firſt; *ſuppoſing that to be thy Caſe. Thou haſt taken up thy Religion, juſt as thou haſt done thy cloths. All civilized people wear ſome Cloths;* Engliſh *people this particular Faſhion, and ſo thou weareſt Cloths of this Faſhion, rather than of that of the* Turks *and* Perſians, *&c. becauſe thou art amongſt the* Engliſh, *and an* Engliſh *Man. In like ſort; all Nations have ſome Religion, Thy Countrey or thy Friends this, and therefore thou art of it. Thou haſt been bred to it as they ſay. Good God! what a monſtrous profane thing is this, That*

*That one who has the uſe of Reaſon, ſhould make no more matter of Religion, than of the faſhion of a Suit of Cloths! And perhaps not ſo much, as ſome vain wretches do, who are more concerned about their garb, than the ſtate of their Souls. O dreadful!*

*As to the* Second, *To pretend Zeal for God and Heaven, meerly for the driving on a poor, worldly, or carnal Intereſt, when really I neither believe God or Heaven, or care for either, what abominable Hypocriſie is this? What incarnate Devils (white Devils as the people ſpeak) are ſuch Men?*

*As to the* Third; *To be perſuaded that there is no true Happineſs but in God; that this World is but a Dream in compariſon of that to come; at the utmoſt, that this Life is a ſtate of Trial, according to my behaviour wherein, I am to be everlaſtingly happy or miſerable, and yet to be indifferent and cool in my Affections, and purſuit of heavenly*

*Goods; to be intent on, and ever buſied about the things that are ſeen (all which perhaps I may part with to morrow) and to be negligent of my Life and Actions, according to which I ſhall one day be juſtified or condemned* (Matth. 12. 37.) *and ſo eternally happy or miſerable. What an inconſiſtent and an unreaſonable thing is it? Am I not, while thus guilty, condemn'd and unexcuſeable, even in the ſenſe of my own mind?*

*Thirdly*; *According to thy Condition, now betake thy ſelf to God by* Prayer; (1.) *Lifting up thine heart to him, and* conceiving of him as a God that ſearcheth and knows thee, that poſſeſſeth thy Reins, *and* diſcerneth the thoughts and intents of the heart, *who therefore moſt intimately ſees whether thou diſſembleſt or no*——*That* will be ſanctified of all who draw near unto him, *and has accurſed all Hypocrites and double-hearted Men; who therefore will be content with nothing leſs than all thy heart, and mind, and ſoul. In the beginning of thy Prayers ſet*

*ſet God before thee as ſuch*; (2.) Confeſſing *to him according as thou haſt found the Summ of thy Guilt. Either,*

Thy regardleſsneſs *of him and of thy Soul: Or* Falſeneſs and Hypocriſie; *In truth, no better than profane Madneſs, in real mocking God with a meer outſide all this while. Or,*

*Thy* abominable Lukewarmneſs *towards God and Religion, but* adheſion to the World and to the Pleaſures of Sin. *Thoſe numberleſs neglects, which thou haſt been guilty of, neglects of Prayer, of Self-Examination, of Repentance,* &c. *Thoſe bold Tranſgreſſions*—In *thine Iniquity; perhaps more than one,* &c.

(3.) Petitioning *for*

A ſerious, compoſed, thinking mind; *Wiſdom to conſider thy latter end.*——For

*A* hearty perſuaſion of the Being, *and* clearer Conceptions of the Nature of God, *ſo that thou may'ſt together* fear *him and* love *him with all thine heart— Truth in the inward parts--For a* ſenſe of true Goods, and zeal for them; Contempt of the World, *and all worldly Happineſs; a deep concernment for thy Duty;* Impartiality and Diligence therein--*The* perpetual Guard of God's Grace; *and other things, as God ſhall move thy heart.*

*Laſtly,* Reſolve *by God's help,* to give thy ſelf to be religious in good Earneſt--- *To perſonate Godlineſs, and to double no more. And particularly,*

1. *To give out* every day ſome ſmall part of time to Religious Duties; *at leaſt, to Thought and Prayer in ſecret. This, by God's Grace, will have a happy effect.*

2. *When*

2. *When thou* prayeſt (*or when thou heareſt or readeſt, &c.*) *to* keep thy mind cloſe to what thou art about; *at leaſt to endeavour ſuch* attention *and* fervour *what thou can'ſt.*

3. *To ſubmit to Chriſt, and treaſure up whatſoever Light and Evidence thou receiveſt.*

4. *To* get ſerious and religious people about thee, *or to* affect the Company of ſuch —— *And other* like helps, as God ſhall direct thee.

## CHAP. III.

### *The Second Duty advised to,* Making our Peace with God.

§. 1. *Seriousness in Religion puts a man immediately upon making his* Peace with God.

§. 2. *Peace or Reconciliation with God, in what sence soever taken,* effected by Repentance and Faith.

§. 3. *The* proper Notions *of Repentance and Faith, both in common Language and Scripture.*

§. 4. *In Scripture they are often put so, as to comprise one another.*

§. 5. *Yet is the joint Practice of both of them absolutely necessary to make our peace with God.*

§. 6. Four Steps to a penitent State.

§. 7. *The first of them, a sight and sense of our own Guilt, called by some* Conviction of Sin.

§. 8.

§. 8. *The ſecond,* Contrition; *The way to work it.*
§. 9. *The third,* Confeſſion *to God. What it is.*
§. 10. *Confeſſion to Man; when neceſſary.*
§. 11. *The fourth,* Forſaking Sin; *Two Branches thereof.*
§. 12. *The Neceſſity of both.*
§. 13. *The Method of effecting both.*
§. 14. *Of Faith, as more particularly concerned in making our Peace with God.*
§. 15. *Of* Prayer *in this Caſe.*
§. 16. *Of* ſubſequent Care *and* Endeavours, *and of the* Lord's Supper, *as the beſt Seal.*

§. 1. IT was good Counſel, though given by one who had more need himſelf to have taken it, than he to whom he gave it; *Acquaint now thy ſelf with God, and be at Peace, thereby good ſhall come unto thee,* Job 22. 21. And whoſoever is once *ſerious in Religion,* as before urged, will very tenderly feel himſelf *concern'd to endeavour ſuch Acquainting himſelf* with God, as

may be a *Method of Peace with him*; nay, he will not be at eaſe with himſelf; he will ſcarce give Sleep to his Eyes, or Slumber to his Eye-lids, till he has made ſome advance towards God for Mercy, and ſo for Peace. Suppoſing any Man now firſt to grow ſerious, and ſo never yet to have been reconciled to God; the ſenſe of a vaſt load of Guilt will ſoon oppreſs and almoſt ſink his Soul; of no leſs a load than the whole Maſs and Body of all his Omiſſions and Commiſſions ever ſince he came to any memory of his Actions; not one of all pardoned, for not one of all repented of: So that he will be crying out with *David*, Pſal. 69. 1, 2. *Save me O God, for the waters are come in unto my Soul; I ſink in deep Mire, where there is no ſtanding; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.* This will put him upon inſtant endeavours of Peace and Reconciliation.

§. 2. Now there is, ſay ſome, a *double Reconciliation* of our ſelves to God; a Reconciliation of the *Perſon* to him, and a Reconciliation of the *Heart and Nature*; a diſtinction, if at all proper, yet

yet moſt certainly of ſuch things as cannot be ſeparated: For without this latter, namely the Reconciliation of the Mind (at leaſt begun, and in a good meaſure accompliſh'd) the perſon can never be reconciled. For if the Mind can never be ſeparated from the Man, then cannot the perſon be reconciled, except the Mind be ſo alſo.

But let there be as much in the diſtinction as there can; to *effect both* theſe kinds of Reconciliation, we are to ſet out, and proceed the ſame way. The *Practice of Repentance from dead works*, (in its full Latitude) and of *Faith in Chriſt Jeſus*, effects both.

§. 3. There are ſcarce any two *Names* in the World more *frequently in the Mouths* of Chriſtians, than theſe two, Repentance and Faith; and there are perhaps *no Duties* of like importance *leſs underſtood*: For both of them being in ſeveral places of Scripture uſed in ſeveral, and very different Sences, many plain perſons are confounded in their Notions, or in the underſtanding of them.

To

To make all then as distinct and plain as I am able; The Word *Repent* (or *Repentance*) according to its *proper import* in usual Speech, is no more, than to be *sorry for something which we have done amiss*; that is, which we apprehend done to our own or others harm, disgrace, or prejudice, some way or other, which therefore we from our hearts *wish undone*, and *would call back or undo*, were it possible for us.

And *Faith* also properly signifies only *Belief*, that is *assenting* or agreeing to any thing as *true*.

This is the *natural* and *full import* of both these Words in common Language. But in *Holy Scripture*, and with Divines, though they retain this their general Notion, yet because they are for the most part applied, each of them to its certain proper Object (as Repentance to *Sin*, called by the Holy Ghost *Dead Works*) and Faith to the *Doctrine of the Gospel*, (and so to *God* and *Christ* its Authors) they receive from thence a determinate and restrained sence, and signifie certain *Christian Vertues*, which are *partly Gifts of God*, (that is, wrought in

in us by his Grace, or by a ſupernatural Power) *partly* alſo *our Duties*, becauſe they are (at leaſt in *the firſt beginnings* of them) ſuch *Acts which God requires of us*, and, by the Means and Aids which he has provided and affords us, has made, and makes, in our powers to exert or practiſe; and (in the *progreſs*, *growth*, *or ripeneſs* of them) *Habits* attained by theſe former Acts, to which he by his Grace hath excited and enabled us. *Repentance* then, as it is an *Act of Chriſtian Duty*, is an *endeavour of forſaking Sin, and of leading a new Life*; or a *Change of Manners for the better*; it is a ſorrow conſiſting not ſo much in grief, or *tranſient Affection* (though there is many times that too in it) as of *ſetled Diſſent and Diſlike*, and ſo of *real Action*; it is ſetting the Heart againſt Sin, and becauſe it is impoſſible for us to undo the Ill we have done, *a taking care we ſin no more*; whether by doing what we ought not, or the neglecting what we ought to do; and as it is an *Habit*, or *State*, it is a *changed Heart and Life*. For by frequent and conſtant endeavour of a new Life, the very frame and tem-

per

per of our Hearts will be changed; and that changed Frame and Temper will have a conſtant influence upon our Actions, and ſo our Life will be changed. Thus as to the nature of Repentance.

Now, as to *Faith*; The moſt general *Act of Chriſtian Duty* ſo called, is, the Soul's *agreeing or yielding that the Goſpel* (or the way to Heaven, which Chriſt Jeſus and his Apoſtles taught) *is true*. It preſuppoſes therefore the underſtanding of that Doctrine or Way. Now the *particular Acts* of it are as *various* as the *Parts of the Goſpel:* And though, with many People, Uſe hath obtained that a *Belief of the Promiſes*, and (indeed of one part of them, of the promiſed Bleſſing, without the reſpect due to the other part, the Condition of that Bleſſing) and ſo a *truſt in God through Chriſt*, is eſteemed the great Act of Faith, yet is the *aſſenting or agreeing to whatſoever is affirmed in the Goſpel*; [as that Chriſt died, roſe again, now ſits in Heaven, ſhall come to judge the World, &c.] as much (or more properly) an Act of true Chriſtian Faith, as ſuch Truſt or Affiance, which in ſtrict-

ſtrictneſs, is a diſtinct Chriſtian Vertue, grounded in Faith. In like manner alſo is the *receiving this dreadful Threat*, He that believeth (and ſo repenteth) not, ſhall be damned, *a true Act of Faith*, yet not of Truſt. And to conclude, the *Belief of all the Commands in the Goſpel*, not only that they came from God, are reaſonable, and fit for us to obſerve; but that they are an effectual and certain way to everlaſting happineſs, (ſo that whoſoever yields the obedience of Faith, ſhall be ſaved) is as much an Act (a neceſſary Act) of Chriſtian Faith, as any of the reſt. And the Habit of Faith is nothing elſe but a rooted perſwaſion of all theſe the ſeveral parts of the Goſpel, by which the Soul is ready, as occaſion offers, to exert any of theſe Acts; Thus as to the Nature of Repentance and Faith, when they ſignifie, or are taken for Chriſtian Vertues or Graces. And yet even when thus taken in Scripture (though they are not always, even in Scripture it ſelf taken for Chriſtian Vertues; yet, I ſay, when thus taken) they are each of them uſed in a very different extent.

§. 4.

§. 4. Sometimes in a *very ample and large ſence* (*Synecdochically*, as we ſpeak) are they put not only for themſelves, but what accompanies them. And thus the Scripture ſeems to make one while Repentance, one while Faith the *whole Condition of the Covenant of Grace*, or to put one of them for all that we, on our part, are by that Covenant bound to do, in order to our acceptance with God, or to the pardon of our Sin and Salvation. Thus not only when St. *John* the *Baptiſt*, and the Apoſtles, but when Chriſt himſelf firſt went out to preach the Kingdom of Heaven, or teach people the way thither, the Sum of their Doctrine is recorded to have been, *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, Mat. 3. 2. and, 4. 17. Mark 6. 12. No doubt both our Lord and his Apoſtles preached *Faith* as well as *Repentance* all along; and St. *Mark*, in the beginning of his Goſpel expreſly brings in our Lord ſo preaching, *ch.* 1. 14, 15. *Jeſus came preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God, and ſaying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.* Yet in the other

other places, Repentance is put alone, but with an intent, no queſtion, that people ſhould underſtand therewith its neceſſary Concomitant and Companion, Faith. And thus when our Lord inſtructs the Apoſtles in what they were to preach, he tells them, It behooved that he ſhould ſuffer, and riſe again, and that *Repentance and Remiſſion of Sin ſhould be preached in his name among all Nations*, *Luke* ult. 47. And as purſuant hereto, St. *Peter*, when he preaches to thoſe who were pricked in their heart by the ſenſe of their guilt in crucifying the Lord of Life; (who therefore had as much need of Faith in the blood of Jeſus, for Remiſſion, as any could have) When he preaches, I ſay, to them what they ſhould do to obtain Pardon, he requires in expreſs terms only, *Repent, and be Baptized*, Acts 2. 38. and, *chap.* 3. 10. to others of the ſame Nation, and under the ſame guilt, *Repent ye, and be converted*: In this laſt place indeed Repentance is more explained than before, but yet no mention made of Faith in any of theſe places, where yet the Deſign was to ſet down the Condition on which

Sin

Sin might be pardoned, which, as will be ſoon evident, is Faith as well as Repentance.

Again, in other places me meet with mention of Faith or believing alone, without any mention of Repentance. Thus in the promiſe annex'd to the Apoſtle's Commiſſion for preaching the Goſpel, *Mark* 16. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved; but he that believeth not, ſhall be damned.* And when St. *Paul* teacheth the poor humble Jailor, what he ſhould do to be ſaved, all he gives in Inſtruction is only, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus, and thou ſhalt be ſaved and thine Houſe*, Acts 16. 31. Here we ſee believing, or Faith alone, without any mention of Repentance, has Salvation promiſed to it; as if a Man were to do nothing to be ſaved, but believe the Goſpel. Nay, St. *Paul*, in his Epiſtles, ſeems to go beyond what is aſſerted in any of theſe places, concluding from due Premiſes, *Rom.* 3. 28. *Therefore a Man is juſtified by Faith, without the Deeds of the Law*: That is, without a Jewiſh, Moſaical Righteouſneſs. And the ſame he

he ſays in other places: The Reaſon hereof undoubtedly is, for that ſincere believing the Goſpel, or *Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, doth moſt certainly involve, or *carry with it Repentance.* He that receives from his heart that Doctrine (or believes that way to Heaven,) which our Lord Chriſt taught, will ſeek Heaven by Repentance, or breaking off his Sin: Elſe, it is plain, he believes not what Chriſt preached at the very firſt; *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* And if he truly and Chriſtianly repent, it is plain he believes in Chriſt, for he takes that very way to Salvation, to which Faith in Chriſt directs him.

§. 5. Yet at another time when the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaks more at large, diſtinctly and expreſly, both Repentance and Faith are each (*in terminis*) ſet down and mentioned, as diſtinct parts of our Chriſtianity, and ſo of that Condition of Pardon and Eternal Life, which the Goſpel propoſeth to us; thus in the Text of St. *Mark* already cited: *Repent ye and believe the Goſpel.* And in *Acts* 20. 21. St. *Paul* proteſting to the *Ephe-*

*ſian* Elders, that in his preaching he had *kept back nothing that was profitable for them*, reduces the ſumm of all he had ſhewed them, and *taught them either publickly, or from houſe to houſe* (that is the whole way of Salvation) to theſe two Points: He had *teſtified both to the Jews, and alſo to the Greeks Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* And agreeably hereto, the Author of the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* makes *Repentance from dead Works*, and *Faith towards God*, two *Foundations* or *Principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt*, Heb. 6. 12.

Upon the whole then, being that all theſe Texts contain the undoubted Words of our Lord himſelf, or of his Apoſtles, or Perſons inſpired by him, for the inſtructing Mankind in the way to Pardon and Salvation, we muſt conclude, either that ſometimes Repentance is ſo put as to compriſe or underſtand in it Faith, and ſometimes again Faith ſo put as to compriſe Repentance; or elſe one of theſe Abſurdities will follow: Either that, (1.) our Lord Chriſt, and the Apoſtles ſometimes taught an

inſufficient

inſufficient way to Pardon and Salvation; or, (2.) that there are two or three ways to them, and 'tis no matter which we take. Neither of which Conſectaries can be ever admitted; at leaſt not by Proteſtants: Wherefore it is not reaſonable to imagine the practice either of Repentance or of Faith, in order to our Peace with God, may be ſpared, becauſe in ſome places only one of them is mentioned; for that thoſe places, which make both neceſſary, evidently inforce us where one only is expreſſed there to underſtand the other: And beſides that, we have ſeen the Nature of each of them is ſuch, that they mutually inferr one the other; that is, neither can be without the other.

This will yet further appear, in the Account now to be given of the due Method of the practice of both, in order to make our Peace with God.

The Son of *Sirach* ſpoke more like an experienced Chriſtian, than a Jewiſh Apochryphal Author, when he ſaid, *Faith is the beginning of our cleaving unto God*, Eccleſ. 25. 12. for one grea-

ter than he tells us, *He that cometh unto God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, Heb. 11. 6. But Repentance is a coming and turning unto God; 'tis a departing from, or putting away what he moſt hates, a wicked heart and life; therefore there can be no practice of it without Faith foregoing.

And not only without ſuch a Faith foregoing as that now mentioned out of the Author to the *Hebrews*, *That God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that ſeek him*, which is only the Faith due by the Law of Nature: (for the Light of Nature will convince us of the Being of a God, and his juſt Government of the World) but even not without moſt of the Acts of Faith truly Chriſtian, will Repentance ever be effected. We have therefore in the firſt place, and before any thing, adviſed and conjured, to be ſerious, intent, and in good Earneſt in Religion; and that (as explained) imports the giving a Man's ſelf honeſtly to underſtand, and by due Evidences to perſwade

ſwade himſelf of the truth of Chriſtianity; ſo that we ſuppoſe him who is to practiſe Repentance, not only to know in general what his Duty is, what Sin is, what the Rewards belonging to Obedience, and what the Wrath and Curſe of God belonging to Sin, but to be heartily perſwaded of all theſe, as alſo, of the whole Covenant of Grace, and its Conditions; that God will as ſurely pardon and ſave every repenting and believing Sinner, as he will damn all impenitent & unbelieving wretches. The Belief of this certain Woe, if he go on in Sin, and certain Pardon and Bleſſedneſs, if he take up, is the foundation and inducement of all true Repentance. Thus a Faith, or a Belief of the Doctrines, Threats, Promiſes, and Commands of the Goſpel, when hearty and real, moves, acts, and ſets on the Soul, at the very firſt, to Repentance; nor is Repentance poſſible without ſuch Chriſtian Knowledge, or without the hearty perſwaſion of the truth of what we know and underſtand, as before ſet forth. Yet over and above all this, we ſhall anon ſee Faith farther concerned, than what has

yet been ſaid comes to, in making our Peace, or reconciling us to God.

§. 6. In the mean while let us take a diſtinct view of the practice of Repentance, and do what we can particularly to ſee by *what ſteps or acts* we may arrive at a *true penitent ſtate*, that is, a Heart and Life changed from a courſe of Sin, to the honeſt and ſtedfaſt endeavour of Holineſs: For, no leſs than ſuch a changed Heart and Life does true Repentance (or a penitent ſtate) import. And the Steps are four.

*Firſt*, A particular ſight and ſenſe of Sin.

*Secondly*, Contrition under it.

*Thirdly*, Confeſſion of it.

*Fourthly*, Actual breaking off the courſe of Sin, both by the ſtudy of Mortification, and of a Holy and Vertuous Life. The due practice of Repentance includes, I ſay, all theſe four.

He who writes this, is not ignorant a certain Church has made the Practice of Repentance a Sacrament, and calls it by the name of *Penance*, and tells us, thereof there are but three parts; Contrition, Confeſſion, and Satisfaction; in

in to which they hedge in Prieſtly Abſolution. And theſe indeed, after their way (or common road of Practice) are quickly diſpatch'd. But they have herein diſguiſed the Truth, and abominably corrupted the moſt neceſſary part of Chriſtian Religion. The whole Truth, which really lies under this Diſguiſe, we will endeavour faithfully and plainly to repreſent, by viewing particularly every one of the four forementioned Steps of Practice, which bring to this happy and peaceful ſtate.

§. 7. And the firſt of them is, *a plain and particular ſight and ſenſe of our own Guilt.* A *ſenſe*, I ſay, as well as *ſight*; and I mean thereby, ſuch a *Conſciouſneſs* of our being tranſgreſſors of God's Holy Commands, together with ſuch a *Perſwaſion* both of the foulneſs of the Fact or Facts whereby we have tranſgreſs'd, and the danger thereof, that we are as far from excuſing, or thinking ſlightly of the Matter, as from denying it: We ſee our ſelves guilty, vile, and loathſome, and without God's ſpecial Mercy, everlaſtingly miſerable.

Some Proteſtant People at preſent delight rather to call what we are now ſpeaking of, *Conviction*, or (in the Plural Number) Convictions of Sin, than to give it the Name we do. And both they and we mean, I conceive, thereby much the ſame with what has been more anciently by others termed (from that Paſſage, as I ſuppoſe, touching thoſe Converts mentioned *Acts* 2.37.) *Compunction. They were*, ſays the Text, *pricked at their hearts*; κατενύγησαν, compunged, point by point pricked and wounded. The like whereto is alſo recorded of *David*, 2 Sam. 24. 10. *David's heart ſmote him after he had numbred the People*. But the Name Conviction of Sin is taken out of St. *John*, chap. 16. 8. Where we read it to be a promiſed Work of the Holy Ghoſt's, that when he ſhould come into the World, *he ſhould reprove* (ἐλέγξει) in the Margin of our Bibles, *convince the World of Sin*; wherefore there is no fault at all to be found with that Term, provided it be allowed, that that conviction of Sin, which leads to Contrition and Repentance, muſt conſiſt in the Sinner's *ſight and ſenſe*, firſt, *of his own*

*pare-*

*particular Guilt*; ſecondly, *of the real Evil of his Sin.*

1. Of a ſight of Sin, that is, of our own particular Guilt. We muſt not only ſee in general, that we are Sinners, Tranſgreſſors of the Laws of God at random; but as to this or that kind, and in theſe or theſe inſtances, that we have offended againſt particular Commands. Namely, we have been, or are, either Covetous, or Drunkards, or Revilers, or Extortioners, or Unjuſt, or Swearers, or Blaſphemers, or Luſtful, and Unclean, or Proud, or Sinners in ſome of theſe, or like kinds, by divers particular Acts, notorious in ſuch or ſuch part, or parts of our Lives. Thus St. *Paul* of himſelf; *who was*, ſaith he, *a Blaſphemer, and a Perſecuter, and Injurious*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. And in the aforementioned place (the Original of this Phraſe, *Conviction of Sin*) 'tis ſaid, *The Holy Ghoſt ſhould convince the world of Sin*, on that peculiar account, *becauſe they believed not on Chriſt Jeſus.*

Now this part of the Conviction of Sin is nothing but a *particular accuſation of Conſcience*, which ſometimes God in

in a great measure *prevents* us with, without any endeavours of our own, under the *Ministry of his Word*, as in the Case of those Converts before spoken of, *Acts* 2. Sometimes by the *Holy Spirit's secret and more immediate quickning or awakening Conscience*; as in the Case of *David*, already also mentioned. Or, otherwise *by some surprizing Affliction*, or cross Providence; as in the Case of *Joseph's* Brethren, when they had been apprehended, and kept three days in durance, for being, as was pretended, Spies: *We are*, say they, *verily guilty concerning our Brother, in that we saw the anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us*, Gen. 42. 21. Or perhaps in *some other Methods*.

But as for a *full and due sight of all* the Particulars of ones Guilt, I conceive no person can attain to it, without a *strict and long scrutiny, search or examination of Conscience*; without very mature and considerate enquiry into his Heart, Life and Actions: Which therefore every one who would reconcile himself to God, must upon the first

*pricking*

*pricking or ſmiting of his heart* (in whichſoever of the Methods before-mentioned he feel it) immediately ſet upon. For where there is one Sin, undoubtedly there are more: God having therefore graciouſly ſhewn us ſome, we being awakened thereby, ſhould ſearch after the reſt. Convictions of Conſcience from God, ſhould put us upon ſtricter ſelf-examination. No corner of our Heart (as I may ſo ſay) that is, no part or powers of our Soul ſhould be left unſearch'd. An Enquiry after Sin ſhould be made through all our Deſires, Deſigns, Counſels, Buſineſs and Employments, and (if poſſible) through all the Actions and Parts of our Life. So as to have all our Sins, after ſome ſort, in order before us, bare-faced and open.

2. The other part of Conviction of Sin, is a ſight and ſenſe of the Evil of Sin; that it is not only *foul and odious*, diſagreeable to the true Principles of our Nature (to what in our hearts we approve) and unworthy of the ſence and underſtanding of a Man, making us brutiſh, loathſome in the eyes of God, and

and of all good and wiſe men, and even of our ſelves, when we are truly our ſelves, and judge of things as they really are; but alſo moſt *miſchievous and deſtructive*; that it at firſt brought Death, and all temporal Miſeries into the World; that it brings upon us at preſent the Wrath and Curſe of God, Curſes in our Perſons, Eſtates and Names, Curſes in our Families, Relations, and all our Concerns; Curſes more than we can well comprehend; yet are all theſe preſent Curſes nothing in compariſon of what it will bring upon us without Repentance, a Portion with the Devil and his Angels, *The Wrath to come*, or *the Vengeance of everlaſting Fire.*

And this part of the Conviction of Sin, is nothing elſe but the *Sentence or Doom of Conſcience* upon the former Convictions. Now with this alſo ſometimes does God prevent us; either by the Miniſtry of the Word, or by ſecret Terrors immediately ſent into the Conſcience (flaſhing, as it were, Hell-fire in our faces) or by more moderate Afflictions, *ſealing inſtructions to our Ears.* The Degrees wherein Holy Men are exer-

exerciſed herewith, as well have been, as are, and ever will be, very different. But it is ſurely the Duty as well as Intereſt of every one, who would be penitent and holy, either in Heart or Life to endeavour by a frequent conſideration as well of the real ſhamefulneſs, vileneſs and deteſtable Nature of Sin, as of the Dangers thereby preſent and future, to Body and Soul, Perſon and all perſonal Concerns, to poſſeſs their hearts with a deep ſenſe of its Evil. 'Tis as certain as God is true, that *Miſchief will hunt the wicked man to overthrow him*, Pſal. 140. 11. And, *be ſure your Sin will find you out*, Numb. 32. 23. There is no poſſibility of flying from Guilt, except a man could fly from himſelf; nor of flying, that is, eſcaping from puniſhment, except it were poſſible to fly from God. Theſe things he ſhould frequently and ſeriouſly think upon, whoſoever would fix in his Heart a ſight and ſenſe of his Sin; the honeſt endeavour whereof is the firſt ſtep to true Repentance.

§. 8. A Second is *Contrition*, *Brokenneſs of Heart* (ſo named from *Pſal.* 51. 17.) or *ſorrowing after a godly ſort*, (as the

the Apoſtle calls it, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11.) when looking upon our Sin, we really in heart are afflicted for it, and mourn over it. This ordinarily through the Grace of God, follows naturally upon the other, in the converſion of every Sinner; but in caſe we find it either always to have been much wanting, or at preſent decayed and loſt (to our ſenſe) in us, there is no ſuch way to beget or raiſe it again, as to endeavour to *heighten the ſight and ſenſe of our own Guilt, and God's infinite Grace and Goodneſs.* To this purpoſe the ſeveral aggravations of our Sins are to be conſidered. We, it may be, from our Cradle to our preſent Age, have all along been in ſuch Circumſtances, that *all our Sins are exceeding ſinful.* What Mercies has God continually heaped upon us, and even laden us with? How early were we acquainted with his Will, and made ſenſible of our Duty and Obligations to him? What Aids have we received by Education? What Warnings by Miniſters, by Parents, by Friends? Having even been *hewed by the words of his Meſſengers*, or Agents of all ſorts? What quickning by his Spirit?

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Has not *his Word* ( to allude to holy *Jeremy*'s expreſſion ) *been in our heart, as a burning fire ſhut up in our Bones?* Yet have we ſuppreſs'd or ſmothered all this warmth, and quenched the holy Spirit. Nor Conſcience, nor Grace has prevailed to reſtrain us from Sin; we have trampled on both. We have heard again and again of the *Blood of Jeſus*, ſhed for us, and been preſs'd with our duty thereto; yet in effect, have we *accounted it an unholy thing*, at leaſt, made it to us hitherto very ineffectual, for Baſeneſs or Trifles *denying the Lord that bought us.* And all this *how often? how long?* Are not in a manner all our Sins become habitual to us? A ſecond Nature, by our own very Act? So that *being accuſtomed* ( *Learn'd*, as the Original Word ſignifies, namely, by our own wicked practice ) *to do evil, we cannow no more do good than the* Æthiopian *change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots.* Look, look, poor Soul, that canſt not mourn for Sin, look upon thy ſins, what an infinite number or heap is there of them, reaching up to Heaven? And all of them Crimſon ſins too, crying

to

to God in heaven for vengeance upon thee. Look, I ſay as near as thou canſt, on their *Number* and *Nature*, and look till *thine Eyes affect thine Heart*, and thine Heart diſſolve in Tears. This is the readieſt way to produce Contrition, or Godly Sorrow; the Endeavour of which is a ſecond ſtep to Repentance.

§. 9. A third will be *Confeſſion of Sin*, and indeed without this, eſpecially to God, Contrition will be very faint: Our affections are not ordinarily moved without attent and continued thought; and thought will not well be kept attent without words: When therefore we ſay a ſight and ſenſe of Sin, together with Contrition for it, and Confeſſion of it, are a firſt, ſecond and third ſtep to repent, this is not to be ſo taken as if they were disjoyned, ſeparate and practiſed perfectly apart from one another, or any of them without the other; they who would be true penitents muſt (ſeriouſly caſting themſelves before God in ſecret) *Examine*, *Mourn and Confeſs*, as new matter offers it ſelf; and then Examine again for more matter, and Confeſs and Mourn again. All theſe run into one another,

another, and lead one to the other (as I may ſay) backward and forward: And a Soul by honeſt endeavours of them before God in ſecret, will even by its own experience, and the duct or courſe of its own affections, find the due method, order and ſavory practice of them, better than words can expreſs, or any Caſuiſt adviſe.

Now by Confeſſion of Sin we muſt not conceive to be meant *a meer reciting of our Sins*, or rehearſing before God our ſeveral *Acts of Sin*, (which yet God knows to do perfectly is impoſſible for the beſt of us) no nor giving account even of *all the ſeveral kinds* of our Sins (though both theſe are to be done as far as we are able) but a *hearty affectionate charging and accuſing our ſelves before God*, according to what we know, to the very full heighth of our guilt, acknowledging together that our Confeſſions, and Self-accuſations come far ſhort of the juſt account or ſumm of our Sins, whereof a vaſt multitude are unknown to us; owning our ſelves therefore to have deſerved eternally the Divine wrath and curſe, and at preſent to lie at God's

mercy. Thus at once not only *accuſing* but *condemning*, and as it were paſſing Sentence on our ſelves, and giving thereby glory to God, whatever becomes of us. This kind of reflections will certainly by God's grace bring us to deep remorſe, and humiliation of Soul, abhorrence of our ſelves, and admiring the goodneſs of God, who has born with us ſo long, and has never (all this time) taken advantage againſt us, while going on in the affronting his Juſtice, abuſing his Grace, and by all ways provoking him to cut us off in the midſt of our Days as well as midſt of our Sins. And from hence our Confeſſions will lead us inſenſibly into *deprecating* that wrath, which we have owned our ſelves to have deſerved; to the begging mercy and pardon as earneſtly as ever poor Malefactor, when about to receive Sentence, acknowledged what he had before endeavoured to hide, and caſt himſelf upon mercy. Such affectionate work as this, I ſay, is that Confeſſion of Sin before God, which leads to and together ever accompanies Repentance.

§. 10.

§. 10. Some indeed make Confeſſion (as it is a part of what they call Penance, and in the name of Penance, they would be content we ſhould think they include all Repentance, or rather mean thereby the whole Method of reconciling Men to God) ſome, I ſay, would make Confeſſion to be little (if any thing) elſe, but an unboſoming our ſelves to a Prieſt, diſcovering to him all our moſt ſecret ſins, which either are, or we ſuſpect to be mortal, (as they ſpeak) with their ſeveral Circumſtances. But this Uſurpation upon Mens Conſciences, and Oppreſſion of Souls (without any Command in Scripture, introduced only into the Church declined in Purity, and ſerving meerly to maintain an extravagant power in every Father Confeſſor (that is, generally in every Prieſt) our Church has moſt deſervedly abrogated; and though there be *ſome particular Caſes*, in which, with the Holy Scriptures, and Ancient Church, we teach the *confeſſing our Sins to Man*, to be expedient, if not neceſſary alſo to our Peace with God; yet out of theſe Caſes is not confeſſing to man either requir'd, or even always fit.

The *Caſes* wherein it is neceſſary, are but *Three*, as far as I am able to comprehend.

The *Firſt*, That of *Publick Scandal* given to the Church by groſs and open ſin, whereby any perſon has forfeited his Chriſtianity, or his Right and Title as well to Heaven (or the Church above), as to his Memberſhip of the Church on Earth. It is very neceſſary ſuch perſon take publick ſhame to himſelf, and openly declare his Sin, to the end he may as openly declare, and give proof of his Repentance; and Chriſtian People may be ſatisfied in communicating with him again. And *this*, if ſome will call a kind of *ſatisfaction for* ſin, they may have their pleaſure; provided they neither imagine, nor bear the World in hand it avails to make atonement for the guilt of Sin before God, in which behalf nothing was, or ever will be meritorious, but the Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt upon the Croſs.

2. In caſe of having *wronged any particular perſon* by Word or Deed, it is requiſite the Perſon who has done wrong, go to, or ſend for, meet, or otherwiſe apply to the party wronged, and confeſs

ſeſs the wrong he has done; if able, making alſo ſatisfaction; if not, acknowledging his fault, and deſiring pardon and reconciliation. This is expreſly our Lord's Doctrine, *Matth.* 5. 23,24. *Therefore if thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* And as far as *this* is any part of the *ſatisfaction* required in the *Romiſh* Church, under the ſame Caution as before, we not only contend not, but moſt readily admit it; yea, and require it.

3. In caſe of the *guilt of any particular Sin preſſing the Conſcience*, and any *doubts, fears*, or *diſquiets of Mind*, which private Chriſtians are not able themſelves to ſatisfie: Nay in caſe any ſuſpect the weakneſs of their own Judgments, or proneneſs to flatter, and deal too favourably with themſelves, (which Suſpicions there are often great Reaſons for) ſuch perſons may, and ought to have recourſe to their ſpiritual Guide, who may direct them in truer, fuller, and

more ſufficient Methods of Repentance, inſtruct them in the Promiſes of Pardon, and pray with them, and for them, that they may obtain it. But in this Caſe we are now ſpeaking to, *Confeſſion to a Miniſter* ſtands in the Church, as an *Act of Chriſtian Diſcretion* and free choice, not of abſolute and perpetual neceſſity, much leſs is it in all Caſes of mortal Sin, a Duty, as it is made by ſome.

For even in this Caſe we are now treating of, one Chriſtian Friend may moſt charitably and profitably confeſs his Sin to another, (though as we ſpeak, a Lay-Perſon) and beg his Counſel, Aſſiſtance, and Prayers to God for Pardon; which is the true ſenſe of St. *James*, *chap. 5. ver. 16. Confeſs your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed; the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* But all theſe are particular Caſes (the two firſt alſo primarily and ordinarily neceſſary for reconciling our ſelves to Men, rather than to God; though without them, where by particular Reaſons requiſite, and in our own power we cannot

cannot look upon our ſelves reconciled to God;) and ſo none of theſe belong abſolutely to Repentance in general, whereby in all kinds of Sin we make our peace with God, and which is under preſent conſideration. And thus far of Confeſſion whether to God or Man, as a third Step to, or Concomitant of Repentance.

§. 11. A *Fourth*, and the moſt neceſſary of all, and, which of all yet mentioned, neareſt approacheth to, or even enters the very nature of true Repentance, is *forſaking Sin*, that is, *breaking off the Practice* of it, and endeavouring to *root out the Habit*, Cuſtom, yea, and all *Inclination* thereto.

Now, if we duly conſider the great variety, or ſad abundance of the Habits of Sins in us, we ſhall ſoon diſcern the breaking our ſelves off them to be a larger Work, and of a far vaſter ſcope and compaſs than we were at firſt aware of. For we have all of us Sins of Omiſſion as well as of Commiſſion, and no doubt, ſome Habits of both: Habits, I ſay, (moſt of us) of doing nothing, of Lazineſs, putting off, and totally neglecting Duties,

as well as Habits of doing Evil, Habits of common Sloth, and Habits of ſpiritual Sloth (or of being backward to, dull and ſlow in all holy Duties) as well as Habits of Exceſs in eating, drinking, apparel, ſleep, &c. Habits too perhaps of Covetouſneſs, of Voluptuouſneſs, of Ambition, of Pride, with general inordinacy of Paſſions. All theſe, and other like, true Repentance breaks a man of; ſo that this our fourth Step will contain in it two Particulars, or a Negative and Poſitive Part, according to the Prophet; *ceaſing to do evil*, and *learning to do well*; or the abandoning the old converſation (all ſinful Life and Practice,) and the Endeavour and Practice of ſuch Vertues and Duties which we before neglected, or which are moſt contrary to our former Evils; in the Language of the Apoſtle (*Epheſ.* 4. 22, 23.) *Putting off concerning the former Converſation, the Old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts: And being renewed in the Spirit of our Mind.* And indeed the Neceſſity and Method of Practiſing of both theſe Particulars, is one and the ſame.

§. 12.

§. 12. First, As to the *Neceſſity* of them both: Without both theſe all Convictions, all the Contrition imaginable, all Confeſſions find not Mercy with God, nor avail to make our Peace. For the Promiſe of Mercy or Peace runs thus; *Prov.* 28. 13. *Whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh his Sins ſhall find Mercy.* And forſaking is clearly the more momentous Act, of much more weight and conſequence than confeſſion. For in caſe of wickedneſs perſiſted in, God has proteſted not to hearken to our Confeſſions, Cries, or Prayers. *When ye ſpread forth your hands* (ſaith he) *I will hide mine eyes from you; when ye make many Prayers, I will not hear,* Iſa. 1. 15. *But waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doing from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, ſeek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow: Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord; though your Sins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be white as Snow; though they be red as Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool.* And to the ſame purpoſe ſpeaketh the Holy Ghoſt by *Ezekiel*, chap. 18.

18. 21, 22. Obſerve here alſo as before thoſe two branches ſet diſtinctly, *Turning from all Sins, and keeping all God's Statutes, or doing that which is lawful and right.* The ſame have we over again as diſtinctly, chap. 33. 19. of the ſame Prophet: Nor is the Doctrine of the New Teſtament different. This is the genuine and true meaning of *putting off the Old Man with his deeds, and putting on the New Man,* (Coloſſ. 3. 9, 10.) as it is by command made a duty, or can poſſibly be an act of ours: Nothing elſe but *Eſchewing of evil, and doing good.* (*Habitually* by conſtant endeavours and impartially) which St. *Peter* alſo tells us is the Courſe, *all they who love life,* muſt ſtill take, 1 *Peter* 3. 10, 11. It is remarkable that when many of the *Phariſees and People were Baptized of* John, *confeſſing their Sins,* (thinking haply that Confeſſion with the Baptiſm of ſo holy a perſon (greater than whom had not been born of Woman) might ſtand them in much ſtead God-wards) the Holy Baptiſt entertains this confeſſing multitude with no better a welcome, than, *O Generation of Vipers, Think*

*not*

*not to ſay with your ſelves we have Abraham to our Father*, &c. *But bring forth fruits meet for Repentance.* As if he had ſaid, content not your ſelves with theſe Confeſſions, nor this Baptiſm, act and live as becomes true Penitents: *For the Axe is* (now under the Goſpel) *laid unto the root of the Tree: Therefore every Tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewen down, and caſt into the Fire.* And to wave other no leſs expreſs ſayings both of our Lord and of his Apoſtles, St. *Paul* who at other times argues ſo earneſtly for *Juſtification by Faith* (as to ſome ſeems *alone*, though that phraſe or way of ſpeaking be no where found in Scripture, St. *Paul*, I ſay) as if cautioning us againſt any licentious inferences from that Doctrine expreſly tells us, *In Chriſt Jeſus nothing avails but a new Creature.* Gal. 6. 15. which he calls *chap.* 5. 6. *Faith working by Love*, and explains his ſence of both, (1 *Cor.* 7. 19.) *to be keeping the Commandments of God.* In ſhort no other is the ſcope of the whole Goſpel, and to this effect run all the promiſes or aſſurances God any where gives us of peace with

with him. For *there is no peace, ſaith my God to the wicked:* Iſai. 57. *ult.* Thus as to Promiſes and Commands to this purpoſe.

And as to matter of Fact, that is perfectly agreeable hereto. It is very obſervable to this purpoſe, what is recorded of the body of the Jewiſh Nation of old, *Judg.* 10. 10. the Children of *Iſrael* having again and again done evil in the ſight of the Lord, he *ſold them into the hands of the Philiſtines, and into the hands of the Children of Ammon, and they vexed and oppreſſed them eighteen Years.* In this time *the Children of Iſrael cryed unto the Lord ſaying, we have ſinned againſt thee, both becauſe we have forſaken our God and alſo ſerved Baalim.* They cryed, that is prayed earneſtly, and as follows confeſt particularly, (1) Their Neglects and Omiſſions: We have forſaken our God: (2) Their Commiſſions: We have ſerved *Baalim.* To this their Confeſſion and Humiliation, what anſwer does God return? *ver.* 11. &c. *And the Lord ſaid unto the Children of Iſrael, did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from*

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*the Amorites, from the Children of Ammon, and from the Philiſtines. The Zidonians alſo, and the Amalekites, and the Moabites did oppreſs you, and ye cryed to me, and I delivered you out of their hand: Yet ye have forſaken me, and ſerved other Gods: Wherefore I will deliver you no more: Go and cry unto the Gods which ye have choſen, let them deliver you in the time of your Tribulation.* A ſad anſwer to the prayer, as would ſeem, of a Penitent as well as diſtreſſed Nation. But alas! they were not yet penitent. Well, they begin again to better effect, *ver.* 15. *And the Children of Iſrael ſaid unto the Lord, we have ſinned, do thou unto us whatſoever ſeemeth good unto thee, deliver us only we pray thee this day. And they put away their ſtrange Gods from among them, and ſerved the Lord?* Aye, now they repent in good earneſt; for their Reformation is proportionable to their back ſliding. They *had ſerved Baalim*, that is, ſeveral Heathen Gods or Idols as they confeſſed, *ver.* 10. Now therefore *they put away their ſtrange Gods*; plurally, as many as they had ſerved: They had *for-*

*ſaken*

*ſaken their God*, now therefore they *ſerve the Lord*; in the Original *Jehovah*, their and the only true God. This practice God immediately adjudges real Repentance, and accordingly deals with them, *And his Soul was grieved for the miſery of* Iſrael, and accordingly he forthwith ſends them a deliverer. Anſwerably to this pattern muſt we model our Repentance, reforming actually according to all the inſtances wherein we have ſinned, if we deſire our Repentance, as theirs did, ſhould make our peace with God. Like Repentance will have like ſucceſs; that is, will reconcile God to us; but if we ſtop, as at firſt they did, at leſs than half way, we ſhall be ſent away, as they were, and left, till we make through work, under the Divine diſpeaſure.

Thus we ſee the neceſſity of both theſe Branches of forſaking Sin.

§. 13. Now as to the *Method of doing it*, or the way of proceeding, and the ſeveral acts, by which we may break off our ſinful courſe; (for God knows this Change is a longer work than to be done ordinarily at one act or in an inſtant,

ſtant) this hath two parts. The firſt conſiſting of ſuch Gradual Acts as may be done for the preſent, and in one or ſome few Days. The ſecond of ſuch as require longer time and muſt be of great continuance.

The former ſort I conceive it beſt ſo to divide, or branch forth, as to make thereof three particulars.

1. *A general Reſolution* (from the bottom of our hearts) *touching intire amendment*, or reforming our ſelves in all we now ſee, or ſhall at any time hereafter diſcover ſinful in us.

2. *A Conſultation* or due conſidering with our ſelves *how we may effect ſuch amendment and Reformation*; and that eſpecially as to ſuch particular caſes, wherein we find our ſelves to have been moſt faulty.

3. *A particular Reſolution*, or (as occaſion ſerves) *Vow, touching the uſe of thoſe means*, which we have found propereſt to amend us; and touching ſuch inſtances of our manners, which upon inquiry we have found to have moſt need of Reformation. And all theſe three muſt particularly go through both the former Branches. As

As to the First, namely, a general resolution of amendment and reformation, and that extending to all Acts and Habits, whether of Omission or Commission, in which upon examination we find our selves to have been faulty. This was the subject and true import or meaning of holy *Barnabas*'s exhortation to the People of *Antioch* in his Visit of them, *Acts* 11.23. *He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* Now by this general Resolution, I mean, a considerate choice of, a steddy, mature determination, or fixing the Will on impartial Holiness. The truth of the Matter is, if Men were duly sensible of the state of things, and convinced of those unchangeable Laws, by which God has resolved to govern and judge the World, there needed no long consideration in this Case. We have but a short scope for Choice; either amendment or eternal Torment; Holiness, or never expect to see the face of God, but as he will be a dreadful Judge to condemn impenitent Sinners to everlasting flames, and therein to the society of Devils. This very

very thought, one would think, ſhould quickly awaken people to the choice and purpoſe we preſs. However, that this is a proper Method appears, for that ſuch choice and purpoſe we find expreſly avowed by Holy Men, that is, by true Penitents in their practice, in Scripture, *Pſal.* 119. 30. *I have choſen the way of Truth: Thy Judgments have I laid before me.* And, *ver.* 57. אמרתי לשמר *I have ſaid to keep*, that is, I have determined, and reſolved with my ſelf to keep *thy words.* And *ver.* 112. *I have inclined* (or bowed down) *my heart* [ in the old Tranſlation well, I have applied my heart ] *to perform thy Statutes always to the end.* And in *Joſhua*, chap. 24. 15. *As for me and my Houſe, we will ſerve the Lord.* Theſe Precedents abundantly ſhew how proper a ſtep *this Particular*, which I called a *general Reſolution of entire amendment*, is toward actual breaking off the courſe of ſinful Life.

As to the Second, namely, *due Conſideration*, or entring, as it were, into a conſultation with our ſelves how we may effect the Reformation we have re-

ſolved on: Herein we muſt exerciſe real Care, Thought, and Study; and ſometimes perhaps more care and thought than meerly our own: For it is much eaſier generally to purpoſe, than in ſpecial to perform amendment; much eaſier indeed to reſolve, as we think, upon a total reformation in all, than to bring our idle and deceitful hearts to it in any one particular Caſe: Here, therefore, I ſay, more and longer conſideration muſt be employed, and many a Petition (mean while) put up to God for guidance.

Particularly, the Soul entring deeply within its ſelf, by ſerious reflections, muſt put ſuch Queſtions as theſe to it ſelf. Firſt, What are the Sins which I have moſt lived in? *What is mine Iniquity?* Or the particular Sin or Sins that eaſily beſet me? Then, what Remedies can I find againſt them? For inſtance, Suppoſe idle ſpending my time, or Intemperance be a Sin of mine; it ſoon appears evil Company is a common ſnare thereto. A Remedy therefore of it is, to avoid ill company; to harden my face, and my heart againſt many a gang of men that will thruſt themſelves upon me. For

(1 *Pet.*

(1 *Pet.* 4. 4.) *They will think it ſtrange that I run not with them to the ſame exceſs of riot* as formerly, *ſpeaking evil of me.* And by the way, this is to be noted in general, that *a conſtant and univerſal remedy againſt all or any Sin, is, avoiding the Temptations to them reſpectively.* Conſider therefore, what draws or betrays thee into ſuch and ſuch Sins, and avoid that. This in all Caſes of Sin, or more than this, is moſt certainly our Duty. For we are commanded, (1 *Theſ.* 5. 22.) *to abſtain from all appearance of evil.* Now if Sin has any appearance, beſides that of its actual being, it certainly appears in the Temptations to it.

Again, Suppoſe unjuſt dealing be my Sin, what leads me to it? Probably immoderate Love of this World, 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. *They that will be rich fall into temptation and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful luſts, which drown men in deſtruction and perdition.* No obſtacle, difficulty or hardſhip, no danger, ſhame, labour or pains will ſtand before that man in his way to ſin, who has ſet his heart on this World. Here therefore I

muſt ſtrike at the Root, and mortifie this inordinate love of *Mammon*; I muſt conſider, *Man's Life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth*, Luke 12. 15. And have I not enough to carry me tolerably through this World, and to leave ſufficiently alſo to my Family for their ſupport, provided they will be vertuous and induſtrious? If I have ſo, 'tis a great queſtion whether without ſin I can ſeek after a greater Eſtate: More would be only a load to me, and in all probability a ſnare too, both to *Me and Mine*. A Load, I ſay, by new and unneceſſary Cares, which that *More* would bring. And is it not a wrong to my ſelf to draw more Cares on my ſelf than are conſiſtent with my own Happineſs and God's Glory? Again, more than enough would be a ſnare to me; for I ſhould ſtill thirſt after more: For in all Caſes we ſee where men's thirſt or deſire is not ſatisfied with that which is enough, that is, which is convenient, there it never will be ſatisfied. And it will be a ſnare alſo to thoſe of mine to whom I leave it, For more than what will ſuffice them in a vertuous induſtrious

induſtrious Life, does but tempt them to caſt aſide Vertue and Induſtry. And to leave them wherewithal to ſupport them in Vice and Idleneſs, I never ſhall be able, nor is it poſſible, if I ſhould leave them a Kingdom. But yet if I could leave wherewith to ſupport them in Vice or Idleneſs, yet I ought not. So that I ſay, it is moſt probable, men cannot propoſe to themſelves vaſt and immoderate Eſtates (Eſtates beyond their degree) without Sin. Wherefore, having enough, as before ſaid, I ought therein to acquieſce, and ſatisfie my ſelf to enjoy it, and uſe it well, and lay aſide ſo much dealing in the World as perhaps I graſp at; which if I will reſolve upon, I ſhall ſoon break my ſelf of unjuſt dealing.

Secondly, The Soul, which would break it ſelf particularly of its peculiar courſe of ſinful Life, ſhould in ſecret ſeriouſneſs put alſo this Set of Queſtions to it ſelf.

What are the Duties I have moſt groſly neglected? And what has drawn me to ſuch Neglect? And what Mean or Means will ſecure me againſt it, or

quicken me to the performance of my Duty? Now whatſoever I find that or thoſe Means to be, I muſt reſolve thereupon.

As ſuppoſe Prayer by my ſelf, or Prayer in my Family, is one Duty I have groſly neglected; and ſhamefacedneſs, fear of being laughed at, or reputed a Preciſian, or Fanatick, has betrayed me to this neglect; let me conſider, Who are they I am aſhamed of it to? Or whoſe Laughter is it I fear? My Friend's? My Family's? Theſe I can admoniſh, check, and turn ſhame juſtly on them. Beſides, it is but ſpeaking of it to them beforehand, and this cures them of the Evil before it break out. Is it my Neighbours reproach I fear? As to them, remember St. *Paul*, Acts 24. 14. *This I confeſs unto thee, that after the way which they call Hereſie, worſhip I the God of my Fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.* Did ſhame either hinder or drive theſe ancient Servants of God, in any point, from the due practice, and open profeſſion of their Chriſtianity? And may I then ſuffer my ſelf to be thereby

thereby either hindred or driven from the ſame? At the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Day of Judgment ſhall I be aſhamed either of having prayed in ſecret, or of having prayed in publick? Will then either the memory of the Act, or the reward of it put me to the Bluſh? And why ſhould it here? My Saviour was laugh'd at, publickly ſcoffed and ſcorned for my ſake; reproached with the imputation of Falſeneſs and Hypocriſie, as if he had only counterfeited himſelf to be the Son of God, and Saviour of the World: And all this while he was actually employed in the ſevereſt part of the Work of my Salvation. *He was reproached of men and deſpiſed of the people. All that ſaw him laughed him to ſcorn; they ſhot out the lip, they ſhook the head, ſaying, He truſted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, ſeeing he delighted in him,* Pſal. 22. 6, 7, 8. And, *Matth.* 27. 39, 40, 41. *They that paſſed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and ſaying, Thou that deſtroyedſt the Temple and buildedſt it in three days, ſave thy ſelf; if thou be the Son of God, come down from the*

*Croſs. Likewiſe alſo the Chief Prieſts mocking him, with the Scribes and Elders, ſaid,* &c. He was then too hanging, and to hang upon the Croſs for me, *making his Soul an Offering for my Sin.* After this, how can I think of neglecting him through any tenderneſs of face? Eſpecially, when I am at preſent in ſo far better (that is, eaſier and more tolerable) Circumſtances than he was; I perhaps am laugh'd at by ſome Fools, or Mad-men, for obeying him; but I am otherwiſe at eaſe, and to have Heaven for the reward of overcoming this petty private affront. Shall then ſuch inconſiderable Trifles make me wave or forgo my Duty? Far be it from me.

In any other Caſe whatſoever, by like Conſultations or Conſiderations, as in theſe Caſes now ſet down, ſhall we, through God's Grace and Bleſſing upon our honeſt endeavour, find out particular means, and by ſuch thought work our hearts to particular reſolution for breaking our ſelves of any other (or whatſoever) Sins we have found more peculiarly prevalent in us. And thus as to the ſecond Step of this Head of Practice.

The

The Third will be, *A particular Reſolution, or* (as occaſion ſerves) *Vow, touching the uſe of thoſe Means*, which we have found moſt proper to amend us, and touching ſuch inſtances of our Manners, which upon enquiry we have found moſt to need Reformation. All general Reſolutions, we know, muſt be performed in particular inſtances of Life and Action, and therefore a particular Reſolution touching thoſe Means, which by conſideration we have found proper to each Caſe, will be no leſs neceſſary than the general Reſolution firſt propoſed as to the main Body of the Work.

As for example; Suppoſe avoiding ill Company be one Means I have found out, to keep me from Intemperance and Exceſs, or from loſs of Time, *&c.* I'll immediately reſolve not only againſt looſe, but againſt vain Companions; I'll keep home more, abandon certain Familiars, eſtrange my ſelf from ſuch and ſuch; I'll ſet my ſelf certain employment; ſo much for ſuch a time, *&c.*

Suppoſe again, contenting my ſelf with ſufficient Proviſions, and abandoning a too peremptory Reſolution I had taken

taken up to be rich to such a degree) be the Means I have discovered proper for the remedying my unjust oppressive dealing, I'll resolve on that, and immediately order my Affairs accordingly.

But in such Cases as these, perhaps single resolution will not suffice to hold our unstable Souls; sometimes therefore, but with much caution and deliberation, we may do well to add Vow. *David*, or whatever holy Man was the Author of that Psalm, did so, *Psal.* 119. 51. *I have said*, (that is, resolved with my self) *to keep thy Words*, and lest that should not do, *ver.* 106. *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.*

Thus as to the first Part of the Method for breaking our selves of Sin, by such Acts as are to be done for the present.

Those which are to be continued are, the prosecution of these Resolutions or Vows by a constant study of Mortification, and by daily endeavours of proficiency in Holyness, through the whole following part of our Life. Now the

treating

treating hereof belongs not to this firſt Claſs of Advices, but is to be ſet down in the ſecond Part.

In the mean while we are to proceed with what yet remains for our preſent making our peace with God.

§. 14. And now after this Practice of Repentance; *Faith interpoſes again*, and that not meerly Faith towards God, or a belief of the Being, Nature, and Providence of God, as hitherto moſt inſiſted on, but *Faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, or Faith as called by the Apoſtle. Rom. 3. 25. *Faith in his Blood.* For *him* (as bleeding for us upon the Croſs, as ſacrificed upon that Altar) *hath God ſet forth to be a propitiation*, and it is *by the Blood of his Croſs* that *he made peace*, *Col.* 1. 20. 'Tis the *Blood of Chriſt, who through the Eternal Spirit, offered himſelf without ſpot to God, that purges our Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the living God*, *Heb.* 9. 14. 'Tis *by that one offering he hath perfected forever them that are ſanctified*, Heb. 10. 14. *This is that Fountain ſet open to the Houſe of* David, *and to the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem *for Sin and for Uncleanneſs*, Zechar. 13. 1. Hither

Hither therefore after all Confeſſions, Contrition, Tears, Reſolutions, Vows and endeavours of Reformation the faithful Soul comes; Here it exerts new Acts of Faith, that is *Truſt, Affiance and Dependance.* And as the Holy perſons (*Matth.* 28.9.) did corporally to our Saviour after his Reſurection, ſo muſt true Penitents, as it were catching the Crucified Jeſus by the Feet, hold him faſt after a ſpiritual ſort, as their only hope and refuge, that only name given under Heaven, that Dear Jeſus *which redeemed us from the Wrath to come*; and with Chriſt thus, not in their Arms but Heart, look up to the Eternal Father for pardon and peace, through the Son of his Loves. This diſtinct truſt in Chriſt, as ſacrificed for our Sins, in this Order (or thus in conjunction with ſuch practice of Repentance as ſet down) exerted or exerciſed, I conceive of moſt eſſential and ſingular Force to the perfecting our Peace both with God, and in our own Conſciences.

§. 15. And now I ſee not any thing which remains (ſpeaking as to a certain courſe

courſe of tranſient Acts) ordinarily to compleat a Man's Reconciliation with God, except we ſhould ſay, it is requiſite to Cloath all theſe Acts with *ſerious and ſuitable Prayer.* Prayer is that Chriſtian Duty, which as I may ſay alone, as it were, gives a body to all the Acts of Grace in the Soul; or (as one well obſerves) "It is indeed "that ſingle Duty, where- "in every Geace is acted, "every Sin oppoſed, every "good thing obtained or impetrated of "God. Without it Contrition, and Faith, and Reſolution, are after a ſort airy and volatil. This fixes them, and makes them ſubſtantial, mature and permanent; Nay, it raiſes and ſtrengthens, or heightens them. Prayer is ſuch an Office, as not only actuates, or draws out into Exerciſe all Chriſtian Graces, but makes the Soul more earneſt and zealous in the Actings of them? Having therefore proceeded, as above directed, towards making thy Peace with God, caſt thy ſelf in ſecret at the Throne of Grace in earneſt and humble ſupplication, confeſſing and bewailing thy Sin, with the

*Dr.* Owen, *of the Spirit of Prayer.*

Exerciſe

Exerciſe of all the Contrition thou canſt excite; paſſing Sentence on thy ſelf, acknowledging what thou haſt deſerved, but withall pleading the Sacrifice of the Death of Chriſt, the atonement made by the Blood of his Croſs, and caſting thy ſelf upon God's mercy, through that great and alone true Propitiation; bringing indeed the heartieſt Purpoſes, and making the firmeſt Reſolutions thou can'ſt, endeavouring to the utmoſt of thy Power to perform all that concerns thee on thy part by the Covenant of Grace; but after all acknowledging thy ſelf an unprofitable ſervant, (*Luke* 17. 10.) diſclaiming therefore any righteouſneſs of thine own, and beſeeching Pardon for thy very Repentance; begging to be ſprinkled with the Blood of Jeſus, and to be found in him. For he is *the Lord our Righteouſneſs*: And thus in him, and through him, thou ſhalt find Peace.

§. 16. Whoſo has thus proceeded, may be preſumed for the preſent (as to what can be effected by private Applications) to have made their Peace with God. Only they muſt be careful *in the*

*ſequel*

*ſequel* or following part of their Life *to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*, and (as both has been ſuggeſted, and will be further given in directions) to purſue, or go on in Holineſs, and to maintain this temper and ſtate by all ſuitable Endeavours to their lives end.

And it will be highly convenient, if any poſſible opportunity offer, to come ſolemnly to the Great Sacrament of Reconciliation, the Lord's Supper, the beſt Seal in this kind; and thither to bring our Reſolutions and Vows, there to ratify them to God, and form them into a Covenant with him; publickly, before Men and Angels, devoting and conſecrating our ſelves to him, in the Union of his Church, through our Crucified Lord. And thus upon the whole, of a Man's preſent making his Peace with God: Which is a Second ſtep in our Firſt Stage of Preparation towards a happy Death.

Matter

## Matter and a Method for Devotion ſuitable to the Third Chapter.

1. *IN ſecret, having at leaſt briefly prayed, and being compoſed, Examine Conſcience: Firſt, touching* the *more* remarkable preventions of Grace, *which through thy life, as well in thy younger, as eſpecially in thy later Years, God has vouchſafed thee, and what effect they have had upon thee. That is,*

1. What Convictions *or ſenſe of particular Sins, (their guilt and danger) has God at ſuch and ſuch times affected thee with, or made thee feel? And didſt thou yield thereto? Didſt thou acknowledge thy Sin hateful, deſerving God's Wrath and Curſe, both here and Eternally. Thou couldeſt not, it may be, but be affrighted at the ſenſe of thy danger. But notwithſtanding thou ſaweſt thy Sin*

thus

*thus provoking to God, and thus dangerous to thy ſelf. Didſt thou not then; nay, even now, doſt thou not ſtill love it as much as ever, if thou couldſt but ſafely enjoy it? Didſt thou, by what ſins thou ſaweſt in thy ſelf, go on to enquire after other ſins, of which thou mighteſt be ignorant, to ſearch thy heart to the bottom, that thou mighteſt attain a full ſight of all thy ſins if poſſible, and ſo a full ſence of thy ſinful and miſerable Eſtate? Or didſt thou ſtifle theſe firſt impreſſions? divert them by Company, Pleaſure, or other Employment? put them off to a convenient ſeaſon? And though perhaps that ſeaſon has come, didſt thou ever yet reſume or endeavour to recover and improve them? Anſwer each of theſe Queſtions faithfully to thy ſelf.*

2. What Contrition, *or Sorrow for Sin, upon ſuch ſight and ſence of thy ſin; as beforeſaid, haſt thou ever conceived by God's moving thy heart, even without any en-*

*deavours of thine? And when thou haſt felt thoſe meltings of heart, and that mourning temper, haſt thou cheriſh'd it, retired, or gone alone, and conſidered the particular grievouſneſs of thy Sins, the vaſt multitude of them, the Mercy, Love and Goodneſs thou haſt ſinn'd againſt,* &c. *That by this means thy ſorrow might bear, in ſome meaſure, a due proportion to thy guilt; or haſt thou endeavoured to put off the melancholy mood (as thou haſt accounted it) and returned to the commiſſion of the ſame, or like Sins, as formerly?*

*Further,* Examine, *In caſe thou haſt made any improvements of the firſt workings of Grace,* What has been thy progreſs? How far haſt thou gone in the work of Repentance and making thy peace with God? *That is,*

1. *Haſt thou endeavoured* fully to confeſs thy ſins before God? *Not excuſing this Act, or reſerving and*

*and flattering thy ſelf touching that beloved Practice, as if no Sin; but heartily and* impartially before God accuſing *thy ſelf of all; acknowledging thy full guilt, and* condemning thy ſelf; *giving glory to God, and owning his Juſtice, whatever becomes of thee; yet together* deprecating his Wrath, *and* ſupplicating for Pardon. *And in caſe thy Sins have been ſuch, which need* Confeſſion to men, *haſt thou been* free herein, and faithful *to thy own Soul? Or haſt thou through tenderneſs of face concealed together thy ſhame and ſore? Poor Soul! Conſider, be faithful.*

2. *Haſt thou, upon ſuch Confeſſions and Deprecations,* really reſolved on a new Life, *and* ſet thy ſelf ſeriouſly to ſtudy it? *Haſt thou* conſulted of fit Methods *of Amendment, and Means proper to thy Condition, for obviating the Wiles of the Devil, and the Courſe of Temptation, by*

*which thou haſt fallen? Haſt thou then particularly* reſolved upon theſe Means and Methods, *and* endeavoured faithfully the Uſe and Practice *of them!*

3. *Haſt thou then afterward* by Faith betaken thy ſelf to the Blood of Jeſus, *as having a Sentence of Death in thy ſelf, loſt and undone without that all-ſufficient Sacrifice on the Croſs, but caſting thy ſelf on God's Mercy, according to his Covenant of Grace, and reſolving to abide by it?*

*Laſtly*, What have thy ſolemn penitential Prayers been in this Caſe? *What* thy Vows? *And* haſt thou been at the Lord's Table *according to thy Duty? Haſt thou uſed tolerable endeavours to perfect thy peace? Or in what part of the fore-mentioned practice of Repentance haſt thou ſtuck? In what of theſe haſt thou failed? Be faithful; remember, Matters of greater concernment to thee than*

*than are theſe, never did, never can fall into thine enquiry.*

*Now ſecondly*, *As* to ſuller preſent Prayer, *ſuitable to theſe Advices, and the Penitent's Condition, whoſoever hath thus faithfully examined Conſcience, cannot be at a loſs, either,*

1. *For* Confeſſion. *Every Particular to which Conſcience pleads guilty, is moſt eaſily, by accuſing ones ſelf of it before God, turned into proper and particular Confeſſion. As for example, in the firſt point of Examination, If guilty, I accuſe my ſelf thus,* I have not yielded to theſe Convictions of my particular Sins; [*of my--- ——of my — &c.*] their guilt and danger; which yet thou, O Lord, haſt affected me with, and made me feel; I did not acknowledge, or inwardly agree, that my Sin was ſo hateful, ſo deſerving thy Wrath and Curſe as I begun to ſee it, I could not indeed but be affright-

ed,&c. *But if any ſhould be ſo weak as that they cannot turn theſe, and like Materials into Confeſſion, let them but again before God on their knees, read over the Queſtions, and putting them to their own Souls, make anſwer to them; This Anſwer I ſay, is true, proper and particular Confeſſion; moſt certainly engaging the heart, made with underſtanding and attention, (as are not always ſome elegantly prepared and formed Confeſſions.) For inſtance, as to this kind of Practice alſo, in the* d part *of Examination:* Contrition, or ſorrow for ſin, upon ſuch ſight and ſenſe of thy ſin, as beforeſaid, haſt thou ever conceived, by God's moving thy heart without any endeavours of thine own? *Anſwer.* More, O God, than I have now: *Or*, more than I have improv'd, cheriſh'd, kept, or maintain'd.

*Again, Queſt.* When thou haſt felt thoſe meltings of heart, and that

that mourning temper, haſt thou cheriſh'd it, retired, or gone alone, and conſidered the particular grievouſneſs of thy ſins, the vaſt multitudes of them, the Mercy, Love and Goodneſs thou haſt ſinn'd againſt, &c. *Anſw.* Lord, I have not: *And ſo in others. This is moſt eaſie, and even this will be very profitable, and ſoon bring Chriſtian people of all ſorts, in ſecret freely to pour out their Souls before God. Nor,*

2. *Can any ſuch perſon after this practice, be well at a loſs for* Petition. *The Soul ſeeing in particular, what it wants, cannot be preſumed ignorant what to ask, or unable to ask it. At leaſt, it is but looking over the Particulars again, and turning them into Petitions. Nay, even while confeſſing our Guilt and our Wants, we can hardly forbear (at leaſt we may both naturally and profitably proceed at the end of each Particular confeſſed) to add Petitions*

*for pardon of Sin, and for ſupply of the Grace we need. As ſuppoſe in my examination of my ſelf, I find I want* a ſight of my Sins, *and have confeſſed ſo much to God; how can I forbear to add by way of Petition,* Lord, ſhew them to me; *in which caſe, no one that reads Holy Scripture, can be ſo barren, as not many times to recollect ſundry Petitions of Holy Men to like effect, which will be marvellouſly helpful and quickning: As particularly that,* Pſal. 19. 12. Who can underſtand his Errors? Cleanſe thou me from ſecret faults: *To which a Soul in the condition we ſuppoſe, will naturally add,* And that I may be cleanſed, ſhew them me, O Lord, ſo as I may mourn over them duly, and throughly repent. *The like I cannot but preſume a little Practice will ſoon naturalize any to, in other points; and therefore forbear adding more in this Caſe.*

*Laſtly,*

*Laſtly, As to* Reſolution; *Though the Particulars requiſite here, may be very different, according as People have been more or leſs guilty in reſiſting Grace, neglecting Repentance, and hardning their hearts, yet thus much may be of general behoof to reſolve upon.*

1. *To* ſet apart *for a while, daily or weekly* ſome time for the particular ſurvey of our whole Life, *from our firſt memory of our ſelves, and for the viewing as near as able, all the Sins of each part of our Age.*

2. *Daily to* particularize in our Confeſſions, *and ever to go mourning over* ſuch ſins *wherein we have* more grievouſly, *or* more frequently *fallen.*

3. *To be* impartial in the practice of every particular Branch of Duty in the whole foremention'd Method or Courſe of making our Peace with God. *And* whatever elſe God ſhall move thy

thy heart to. *For these are only Instances of some material Points, by way of Direction, to make pious Souls understand that practice, which a little Use, and God's Grace, will soon familiarize to them.*

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

### *The Third Duty adviſed to,* Laying up our Treaſure in Heaven.

§. 1. *THree Points neceſſary to be ſpoken to under this head.*

§. 2. *A ſhort account what the* Heavenly happineſs *is, which we are to endeavour to ſecure.*

§. 3. *It is* no preſumption *in a faithful Soul to aim at, or ſeek after this happineſs,* but in ſtrictneſs a duty.

§. 4. Directions *to ſecure it. Of* chuſing God for our happineſs.

§. 5. *Of being* full of Good Works.

§. 6. *Of Good Works in a more* ſpecial ſence.

§. 7. *How Chriſtians of all ſorts may be* rich in Good Works.

§. 8. *Works of* Liberality *and* Mercy, *(or of bodily charity) peculiarly accounted laying up a Treaſure in Heaven.*

§. 9. Charity to Men's Souls *no leſs ſo.*

§. 1. He

§. 1. HE who has been careful and conſcientious in his endeavors to reconcile himſelf to God, as before directed, may through our *Lord Chriſt, who is our Peace*, come with an humble boldneſs to the Father: He may *in his name ask* of the Father whatſoever he can need, or finds himſelf at a loſs for, and he ſhall receive it: He may in ſpecial ask of him *everlaſting life*, and *happineſs in Heaven*; Nay, he ought now to think of no happineſs below Heaven; but there to place his heart, there to ſettle his affections, and in a word, as our Lord enjoyns, *to lay up his Treaſure in Heaven*, the doing which is the next advice or third ſtep in this our firſt Stage.

But for ſinful Duſt and Aſhes to aim ſo high, may perhaps, at firſt ſeem to many poor dejected Souls as much a preſumption, as to ſecure a happineſs in Heaven ſeems to carnal Men impoſſible. Nay 'tis not improbable, many may be much at a loſs, what conceptions to frame of any happineſs there at all. We have been here ſo accuſtomed to live meerly

meerly by ſenſe, that we can conceive of little or nothing, which falls not under our ſenſes. What the pleaſures of Eating and Drinking are, what ſleep and carnal joys, we know too well. But what happineſs there can be in a World, where 'tis ſaid there's none of theſe, we cannot eaſily apprehend. It will therefore be neceſſary here, *Firſt*, to ſhew what that Happineſs is, which we are to propoſe to our ſelves in Heaven. *Secondly*, to prove, in a few words, that for perſons, who have made their peace with God, 'tis not preſumption, but their Duty as well as Intereſt, to lay up their Treaſure, or place their happineſs in Heaven, and indeed in God himſelf. And *Laſtly*, to aſſign ſuch means whereby we may ſecure to our ſelves the heavenly Happineſs or Treaſure.

§. 2. And Firſt, to give ſome account, *what that happineſs in Heaven is*, which we are to propoſe to our ſelves: Not at preſent ſo largely and diſtinctly, as in a fitter place will be expedient to be given; but at leaſt generally, and in the groſs, ſo as may inflame our deſires after it, and excite our diligence to ſecure it.

The

The happineſs above then, is a *State of fuller and more abſolute bleſſedneſs and joy than here we are able to conceive of*: A State wherein all our *reaſonable powers* ſhall be *made perfect*, and *perfectly imployed* on ſuch things which will be moſt intirely ſuitable and ſatisfactory to them. And not only the Soul thus raiſed, but even the *Body* it ſelf ſhall be *exalted to ſuch a degree of Purity*, and *Eternal Eaſe*, as to have nothing in it or about it, which argues any imperfection in its kind; nothing which can hinder the mind in its nobleſt Actions, nothing which can affect the Man with any inconvenience. We ſhall *ſee God as he is, face to face*: See him I ſay, with the eyes of our mind, not theſe poor weak bodily ones. That is, *we ſhall know him, even as we our ſelves are known*, (1 Cor. 13. 12.) not indirectly, or by a long compaſs about, as we now do, but intuitively by immediate Revelation, as it were looking ſtraight upon him. The mind ſhall be ſo raiſed, as to be able to conceive truly and properly of the Being, Nature and Perfections of God. *Our bodily Eyes* indeed ſhall *behold*

*the*

*the Lord Jeſus*, for he has a body viſibly to be beheld, and even this certainly will be a glorious and moſt raviſhing ſight.

Beſides we ſhall be *fitted for the Converſation* of pure Intelligences, that is of *Holy Angels*; and for enjoying the familiarity of all the *Bleſſed Saints*: We ſhall be with Saints and Angels, taken up in the *admiration*, *love* and *praiſes of God and Chriſt*. We ſhall then know too, what the *Holy Ghoſt is*, and be full thereof. We ſhall underſtand plainly what we at preſent ſee only (δι' ἐσόπτρου ἐν αἰνίγματι) through *a perſpective Glaſs and in a Riddle*, how *thoſe three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt are one.* All the *deſires both of the Mind and of the Will*, that is, all our deſires after *truth*, *good*, and any agreeables, ſhall be at once *infinitely ſatisfied*, and yet, with ſatisfaction, *Eternally flowing forth* to that incomprehenſible Fountain of all Truth and Good, the *Eternal Infinite God*: No *Memory* or *Senſe* of any thing *paſt*, or of any thing *here below* remaining with us, any otherwiſe, than as ſuch re-

flections

flections may *heighten our preſent tranſport* or raviſhment. And *all this happineſs* is to be *Everlaſting*, without *End*, without *Intermiſſion*, without *Allay*. This is for the main, ſuch an account as here may ſuffice to be given of the Heavenly Happineſs. But we muſt remember it is infinitely ſhort of the full real Truth. For 1 *Cor.* 11. 9. *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

3. Now, Secondly; as vaſt and infinite as this Happineſs is, that it is *no preſumption in a faithful Soul* (and ſuch certainly are all who have ſo, as directed, made their peace with God) I ſay that it is no preſumption in ſuch a Soul to deſire, pray for, aim at and purſue, this Happineſs is evident, becauſe God has offered it in the Goſpel. The propoſal of this, and of its means, together with the opening our way to it, was the Great Errand and buſineſs, on which Chriſt Jeſus came into the World: *God ſent his Son into the World*, not to condemn the World (to keep them under

der that Sentence of Condemnation and Death, which by Sin had taken place upon them) *but that the World through him might be ſaved. For God,* John 3.16. *ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.* And accordingly our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt hath *aboliſhed Death,* (2 Tim. 1. 10.) *and brought Life and Immortality to light through the Goſpel.* The Goſpel publiſhes the conditions, ways, or means, by which it is to be had (which we have ſeen in part and ſhall further ſee as we proceed) and requires us, thus to ſeek it, under pain of everlaſting miſery, if we do not. And that Men of all ſorts and tempers might be invited thereunto, and prevailed with, our Lord Jeſus has taken care it ſhould be propoſed under ſuch various Notions and Characters as may comply with all Mens tempers. To draw in *Ambitious Men* it is propoſed as *Honour and Glory,* as a *Crown,* a *Throne,* a *Kingdom,* &c. To gain *Men of pleaſure,* it is repreſented as a *Banquet,* a *Supper,* a *Marriage Feaſt, fullneſs of Joy* and

*Pleaſures for evermore*, &c. To allure *Men that love Wealth*, it is called a *Treaſure*, a *Treaſure which neither Moth nor Ruſt can corrupt, nor Thieves break through and ſteal*, the *true Riches*, an *Inheritance incorruptible*, &c. And to be brief, to take with ſome others, it is perhaps called by other names: But in a word to take with all, foraſmuch as *all Men love Life*, and moſt people *Long Life*, it is called, what it is moſt truly, *Everlaſting Life*. Upon the whole, God is ſo deſirous, that none ſhould neglect it, that it is propounded to all I ſay in a way to ſuit each Mans Temper, Humour, and Inclination. The commands to purſue it are ſo many, that it is neither needful, nor indeed eaſie, to reckon them all up: The Encouragements ſo great, that it is not poſſible to add to them; witneſs that one Command, and Superlative Encouragement: *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*, Matth. 6. 33. What can be added to all things? Yet the *Kingdom of God*, and *all things* (that is all things good for them) ſhall they receive, who

ſeek

ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs.

Thus then we ſee in ſome meaſure both what this Happineſs is, and that it is in Strictneſs our Duty to ſeek after it, or endeavour to ſecure it.

§ 4. It is now high time to enquire, thirdly, how or by what means we may ſecure it. How ſhall we convey Treaſure thither? Or how is it poſſible, there to *lay up our Treaſure?*

In anſwer hereto, the Directions ſhall be few and eaſy; of which the firſt is,

Whoever would have a Happineſs in Heaven, muſt *By Reſolution and Prayer chuſe God for his Happineſs*; for it is the Enjoyment of him that makes both Heaven and Happineſs, without Him is neither poſſible. And the *Almighty God*, all that he is, Infinite as he is, is content to be the Happineſs of ſuch poor Worms as are we mortal Men. He of old ſaid unto *Abraham*, and in him the Father of the Faithful, to every (even the meaneſt) faithful Soul, *Fear not, I am thy ſhield, and thy exceeding great reward*, Gen. 15. 1. And he ſays the ſame at preſent to every diſpoſed perſon, who

reads or hears this. Take God then at his Word: And firſt reſolve with thy ſelf, and ſay inwardly in Spirit, *God ſhall be the portion of my Soul.* Let others pleaſe themſelves in other Goods, in *the Encreaſe of Corn, and Wine, and Oyl,* in *joyning Houſe to Houſe, and Field to Field,* in *loading themſelves with thick Clay,* or *laying up Treaſure upon Earth for many years*; for my part I will take up with none of theſe; *the Almighty God ſhall be my portion.* Our Lord *Jeſus* himſelf (for of him prophetically is that Pſalm to be interpreted) did, while in the Fleſh, ſo reſolve, *Pſal.* 16. 5. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my Cup, thou maintaineſt my lot.* Fear not then thou for whom Chriſt died, to the end thou mighteſt come to the Father by a new and living Way, through his bloud: Fear not I ſay, neither forbear, thus to come, thus to reſolve.

And having thus inwardly reſolved with thy ſelf, *Take with thee words,* and apply thy ſelf faithfully and humbly by Prayer to God; telling him, that thou art reſolved to make the ſame Choice

Choice as thy Saviour, not only by his Doctrine, but by his Practice and Example taught thee. Tell him whatever Portion of things below he has given thee, or ſhall give thee, thou art reſolv'd not to be put off with any, with all theſe; nothing below himſelf ſhall ſatisfy thee, for indeed nothing below him can. And to inſure the Choice, that he may give himſelf to thee, tell him thou giveſt thy ſelf to him (but be ſure thou doſt ſo.) Tell him thou wilt leave thy Heart, thy Soul and Affections with him at preſent, never again to be withdrawn; at leaſt, thou deſireſt with all thy heart they never may be withdrawn: Beſeech him that he will keep them to himſelf, and accept of thee; that he will vouchſafe to become thy Happineſs, and make thee know he is ſo. Try him thus, and ſee if he will refuſe thee. If he ſhould, he muſt do that he never did yet; nay, he muſt do what he has ſaid he never will do. *John* 6. 37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.* Chriſt at leaſt has ſaid it; and Chriſt and his Father are one.

Secondly, having once solemnly made this Choice, accustom thy self *in thy daily Devotions* to go to God, to look on him, and *claim him as thy Portion.* The Saints in Scripture often did so. *David*, when in the Cave forlorn and seemingly cast off, did so. *Psal.* 142. 5. *I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living.* *Asaph* did so, *Psal.* 73. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.* And whosoever was the Author of *Psal.* 119. at ver. 57. did so. *Thou art my portion, O Lord, I have said, that I would keep thy words.* And *Jeremy* did so, *Lam.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my Soul, therefore will I hope in him.* Nay, God himself seems to have delighted to be so called, *Jer* 10. 16. *The portion of* Jacob *is not like them*: that is, *Jehovah* the alone true God is not like the gods of the Nations. And again chap. 50. 19. to the same Effect. In both places this seems to be put as a Name no less peculiar to God, than his *incommunicable Name* Jehovah. Nay, it is more

more than this, if more can be: *Deut.* 32. 9. *The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* O infinite Condeſcention! God is his Peoples Portion, and they are his. Wherefore if thou canſt make it out to thy ſelf (that is, if thy Heart bear thee witneſs) that thou haſt given thy ſelf up to God to be his, and haſt thus made Choice of God to be thy Happineſs, doubt not to call him thine, *thy portion, thy exceeding great reward, thy God,* and make thy humble and frequent Claim to him as ſuch. This will further ratify thy Choice, and as I may ſay, more endear thee to thy heavenly Father, and him to thee. This will fill thee, by degrees, with Joy and Peace in believing. This will give thee ſome taſt of Heaven, and the Enjoyment of God before-hand.

§. 5. Eſpecially, if thou be diligent in (what is the next Direction) an *Endeavour to be full of good Works*; for by theſe we lay up Treaſure in Heaven: By theſe we not only ſecure our right to Glory, but through the infinite Grace of God, according to his Method

and Promiſe of rewarding, we add to that exceeding great and eternal weight of Glory reſerved in Heaven for us. In the Goſpel, *the Servant*, who *by one pound* committed to his management, had *gained five pounds*, was *made ruler over five Cities*; and he who *had gained ten pounds*, *over ten Cities*. There will be a *Proportion* between every Man's *Reward* and his *Work*; not indeed of commutative Juſtice, as if our good Works could properly merit, or bring God in Debt to us, but of Grace and liberal diſtributive Juſtice; God of his abundant Goodneſs approportioning the Recompence of Reward to the Degrees of Mens Labours, Pains and Coſt, whether *in doing good*, or *ſuffering ill* and hardſhip for his ſake; both which kinds of Acts may in ſome Sence be called good Works.

*Luke* 19. 12. &c.

But it will be here neceſſary, that we look a little more cloſely into the Nature of good Works.

*Good Works* then may be ſo called either in a *general* or *ſpecial* Sence.

1. In

1. In a general one: As every Act (eſpecially every outward Action) may be called a Work, ſo every good Action may be called a good Work. Accordingly as 1 *John* 3. 4, 8. *Every one who committeth ſin*, that is, *who tranſgreſſeth the Law, doth the works of the Devil.* So he that Acts any thing in obedience to, and *Congruity with the Law of God*, does a *good work*, or *the work of God.*

§ 6. But Uſe has obtained, that we call thoſe *chiefly*, or *eminently good works*, which are *good and profitable to Men*, that is, to other Men, and the Publick. Of which Nature is *giving of Alms*, building and *endowing Alms-Houſes*, Hoſpitals, Schools, *&c.* But of theſe latter it is to be obſerved, that there is too great a Difference very often betwixt *the Action* and *the Work*: So that though the Work be good, the Action may be ſtark naught, or but very indifferent. As for Inſtance, the Phariſee gives Alms, but (*Matth.* 6.) he ſounds a Trumpet, in pretence perhaps, to call together the Poor, but in reality to proclaim his Liberality.

*Ames de Conſcientiâ Lib.*

Liberality. The relieving the Poor with his Alms is a good Work, but thus giving Alms is vain Glory and hypocritical Pride.

Again a man going out of the World leaves Money to build and endow an Alms-House, or for some such publick Good; but while he was alive, he sat hatching over all he had, and would not part with a Penny to any good Use, nor would he now haply, if he could keep it any longer; no nor give it to this Use, if he had Children of his own, or any whom he loved well enough to leave it to. Now suppose such Bequests or Foundations to be or to have been some other Mens Acts at present deceased, I would neither my self censure, nor teach others to censure any deceased Person's Charity or bounty in his Will. But supposing it likely to be the Case of my self, or of any man living, I should think such Bequest scarce so much as indifferently or tolerably a good Work; for it would seem to me an *Act of Necessity*, more than of *Charity*. But better late than never, as they say, wherefore let such Actions pass as they shall.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding it is to be ſaid, and muſt be acknowledged touching all good works of this latter kind, theſe are good works, which only rich men can do; and ſo this is a Method wherein only one, and that far the ſmalleſt part of Chriſtians, can lay up Treaſure in Heaven.

§. 7. But in the former ſenſe, the pooreſt and meaneſt, as well as *Richeſt* ſort, even all Chriſtians of what degree ſoever, may be rich and ought to abound, in good works. And that we may particularly ſee how, we will take one inſtance in each kind of Duties. 1. In Duties towards God: *Prayers* and ſuch kind of *Devotions*, in *time of Leiſure*, *Strength*, and *Vigor*, ſent up to Heaven, againſt a time of need, and eſpecially againſt a dying hour, are *Good Works*: Even poor Widows, maintained by the Church, both may and (according to St. *Paul*'s Sentiments) if Religious will, I am ſure, ought to abound in theſe, 1 *Tim.* v. 5. *She that is a Widow indeed and deſolate, truſteth in God, and continueth in ſupplications and prayers night and day.* And it is certain, Prayers devoutly

voutly ſent up to Heaven, though not ſpeedily anſwered, are not loſt, but are a Treaſure laid up there againſt a time of need; anſwered ſometimes even in this World, at a diſtance, but moſt certainly in another. In 1 *King.* ix. 1, 2, 3. *Solomon* has an anſwer to his Prayer, made in the Temple thirteen years before. This indeed was only for Hallowing an Earthly Temple: But the inſtance, *Act.* 10. 4. was of Prayers that ſped for making a ſpiritual one. *Cornelius* his Prayers as well as his *Alms, were come up for a Memorial before God*; and they are anſwered by no leſs a bleſſing than the gift of the Holy Ghoſt (*v.* 44.) that was, even by a Heaven upon Earth; for the Holy Ghoſt in a Man's heart will turn Earth, or any thing here to Heaven. At leaſt it moſt aſſuredly brings thoſe in whom it dwells to Heaven.

*See Doctor Lightfoot on the place.*

2. In Duties to our ſelves: All acts of Sobriety, Purity, Self-denial and Mortification are good works; and in theſe or moſt of theſe, all ſorts of Chriſtians may abound. That they are good works, and even in the beſt Men perhaps

haps (and moſt laborious in the other kinds of good works) neceſſary, is evident from that of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* 9. *ult. I keep under my body*, ſaith he, *and bring it into ſubjection, leaſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt away.* From the cloſe of which Text it appears alſo, that they are a means to preſerve the beſt Men from miſcarrying in their Chriſtian courſe; and therefore conducing to the *Heavenly Treaſure*, or Happineſs hereafter. A Man would wonder to meet with an Heathen Poet (and him *Epicurean* enough) avowing thus much: *Quo quiſq; ſibi plura negaverit, A Diis plura feret.* "The more any man has denied himſelf, the greater reward ſhall he receive from God. But it is juſtifiable from an infinitely better Authority, *Mat.* 19. 29. *Every one that hath forſaken houſes or brethren, or ſiſters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my names ſake, ſhall receive an hundred fold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life.* And by Parity of Reaſon, who being not called to ſo eminent inſtances

Horat. Ode. *Incluſam Danaen.*

stances of self-denial, practice such lower degrees as are suitable to their present Circumstances, and thereby advance in Holiness, in contempt of this world, and in the love of God, shall receive a proportionable reward.

Not one act then, wherein I have foregone my own will, appetite, or natural inclination, for God or my Duties sake, but God observes it, and it stands as if recorded before him, against the day of Recompences. Every hour's sleep which at any time in my life I broke, or shall break, to pray or meditate, or examine Conscience, or for any other work of Devotion, or of Charity: Every Fast I have kept or shall keep; every day's pleasure or recreation, I have denied my self; every penny and farthing I have forborn to lay out upon my self or vanities, or shall spare from gratifying my humour, or tricking up my body (this pitiful house of clay, which I carry about) stealing it possibly into a poor Man's hands, or house, every of these acts, past or future, is and will be regarded by God, and so proves a Treasure laid up in Heaven. Now though I have

have not the opportunities, advantages, nor perhaps the ſubſtance, which others have, for ſundry of the good works under other heads; yet as to theſe under this, I may be ſufficiently qualified: Namely I may, many and many a time, *Watch unto Prayer*, or like Devotions and good Offices; I may *faſt*, and ſteal alone by my ſelf, to *humble my ſoul* before God, when others run to their ſports; I may ſpare that money for a good purpoſe, which others of my degree vainly expend, beyond what becomes them; I may forbear many of thoſe Cups which others drink, to cheer their hearts (as they ſay) or make them merry, but which perhaps make them mad; at leaſt would make me ſo; I may refrain from pampering my body to feed my luſts.

In ſuch good works as theſe ought every one to abound, who minds the providing himſelf a happineſs to go to after Death. For as wicked men by proceeding, or running on, impenitently in ſin, and not minding *that the forbearance and long ſuffering of God leads them to repentance*, Rom. 11.4.

*do*

*do thereby treaſure up unto themſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* So pious perſons, complying with the Goſpel, or with the Spirit of God, in taking up from the Liberties they have uſed, and retrenching themſelves of many things, which they might have lawfully enjoyed in the days of their youth and vigour, while the *Candle of the Lord ſhined upon their head, and they waſhed their ſteps in Butter*, (to uſe Holy *Job*'s Expreſſions) do hereby treaſure up unto themſelves mercy and grace againſt a time of need; and particularly againſt that great day, *when the ſecrets of Mens hearts*, and all Men's practices *ſhall be revealed*; when *that which has been done in the Cloſet ſhall be publiſht as on the houſe-top*, and *every good man ſhall have praiſe of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 5.

3. In Duties to Men; Juſtice in a ſtrict ſenſe or honeſt dealing is certainly a good work. He whoſe conſtant care it is, in all his Dealings and Actions, *to do to all men as he would they ſhould do unto him*, ſhall not certainly loſe his reward. He has treaſured up what the righteous

righteous Judge who firſt commanded it, will not forget amply to recompence.

Now in this kind alſo all ſorts of Men may abound, and muſt too, if they expect to die with comfort, or riſe with joy. *Luk.* 16. 11. *If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous* (that is untrue) *Mammon, who will commit to your truſt the true riches.*

§. 8. But, as we have above obſerved, in common ſpeech (and indeed even in the uſual language of Scripture) the *term good works* more *peculiarly ſignifies works of Charity* and Liberality; and the doing ſuch is more eſpecially (and even *literally*) ſaid to be a *laying up treaſure in heaven.* Luk. 12. 33, 34. *Sell that ye have, and give Alms, provide your ſelves bags, which wax not old, a treaſure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth: For where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.* And in 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth*

*us all things to enjoy. That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Now though it may ſeem, at firſt, that in this kind of good works, namely thoſe uſually called works of Charity, only rich people are capable of laying up Treaſure in Heaven, or providing themſelves hereafter any meaſure of happineſs; yet if we conſider, there are many good Offices, or kind ſervices, that even the meaneſt ſort ſometimes may perform to their Superiors, and that ſuch ſervices are of real value, we may and muſt account, that poor people endeavouring to do all the good they can to the Bodies, Souls, Eſtates, or good names of others, are as really charitable, and (if diligent to do ſuch good) as abundant in the work of Charity, in their way, as the moſt magnificent publick Benefactors in theirs; and conſequently will be as ſurely and glorioufly rewarded. *He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet ſhall receive*

*receive a Prophets reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, ſhall receive a righteous man's reward: And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one of theſe little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a diſciple, verily I ſay unto you, he ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward*, Mat. 10. 41, 42. In which ſurpriſing promiſe, and (as it were) exceſs of Divine grace and goodneſs, poor people ought, for their comfort, to take notice of three things, (1) How *ſmall matters* from them, to whom little is given, God eſteems as *Alms:* Even a *Cup of cold water given to a fellow Chriſtian*, as ſuch; or haply a *little room or harbour*, in a corner of the poor Cottage, to a weary or wet Paſſenger. (2) How largely God will reward it, with a righteous man's, or a Prophet's reward, according to the nature of the perſon we deſigned to do good to. (3) The ſureneſs of the reward. *Verily, I ſay unto you, he ſhall not loſe his reward*; that is, by an ordinary Figure, he ſhall moſt certainly receive it: Let no one then think, he cannot be Charitable or bountiful be-

Luk. 12. 33. cauſe he is not rich; but let him not fail to do all the good to others that lies in his way: Hereby he provides himſelf *Bags, which wax not old, a treaſure in heaven that faileth not:* That is, he makes a happy preparation for another world.

§. 9. But there is one ſort of good works, or of Charity to others, which tranſcends far all other Bounty; and that is *Charity to the ſouls of Men*, labour in inſtructing thoſe, who are ignorant of God and of their Duty, in retrieving and delivering men from a leud courſe of life, to being ſerious and ſtrict in Religion; in bringing them home to Chriſt and his Church. This is a Charity as far ſurpaſſing that which is meerly extended to Mens bodies, as the ſoul in excellence ſurpaſſeth the body. He that can help a ſoul to Heaven before him, hath certainly ſent an unvaluable treaſure thither. *For if any man err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he which converteth the ſinner from the error of his ways, ſhall ſave a ſoul from death, and ſhall hide a multitude of ſins*, James *the laſt*, 19, 20. Where-

Wherefore to conclude this Head touching good works, *Let us be ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord,* 1 *Cor.* 15. ult.

And thus as to the third Duty, in our firſt Period, of providing for our ſelves a Happineſs in another world againſt we leave this.

## Matter and a Method ſuitable for Devotion to the Fourth Chapter.

FIrſt *Examine*, Whether ever hitherto thou *haſt thought in good earneſt* of *laying up treaſure*, or ſecuring thy ſelf a Happineſs *in Heaven?* Shouldeſt thou die this moment, what reaſonable hopes haſt thou that thou ſhouldeſt be bleſſed in that other world, or after death reſt from thy Labours. Particularly,

1. *Haſt thou any* ſound, *clear, or even tolerable* conceptions *and* rational ſenſe of the life or happineſs of a ſoul abſtract *or ſeparate* from the body? *Or art thou not as it were drown'd in brutiſh Apprehenſions, underſtanding none but a ſenſual life? And are not Spiritual and Heavenly things, in a manner, Dreams, Fables and Romances to thee?*

2. *Haſt*

2. *Haſt thou* lookt upon *it as thy* Duty and Concernment *above all things, to* ſecure *to thy ſelf a* happineſs to come ?

3. *Didſt thou ever* ſeriouſly ſet thy ſelf by Reſolution and Prayer to choſe the *Everlaſting* God for thy happineſs ? *Does thy ſoul in any ſuch meaſure cleave to him at preſent, as that thou canſt with any probable hope claim him for thy Portion* ?

4. *Haſt thou* purſued this choice by an honeſt endeavour of holy life, and abounding in good works, *according to thy quality and power* ? *Or haſt thou not been idle, a Loiterer, and ſecure flatterer of thy ſelf, never really active herein* ? *Or* (*what is worſe, yet very frequent*) *doſt thou not meerly* profeſs to know God, but in works denieſt him, *being* abominable and diſobedient, and unto every good work

reprobate? *Tit.* 1. verſ. *ult.*

Secondly, *Having thus ſtrictly examined thy Conſcience, in the fear of God, by* Serious Prayer, *ſet thy ſelf*, Firſt, *to* Confeſs *thy particular guilt in this caſe, according to the true anſwer of thy Conſcience. In which behalf, if thou haſt practiſed the Devotional parts annext to the foregoing Chapters, and eſpecially the Directions of the laſt, thou canſt not be at any loſs.* Accuſe *thy ſelf ſincerely, and unboſom thy heart before God, by going over again the Particulars. Remember, the Holy God* loveth truth in the inward parts, *and will be readier both to become thine, and make thee his, if he ſee thee to be cordial in the endeavour of making him thy choice.*

*Further, proceeding in Prayer*, 2dly, *Look upon*, Acknowledge and adore God as the only true Happineſs of Man's Soul; *as the Father*

*Father of Spirits, who made thy Soul for himself, and put into it this property, that it can be satisfied with nothing below himself. And if thou findest an inward sense hereof in thy heart, immediately as another act of Prayer.*

3*dly*, Bless God *for this Token of good (for such certainly it is to thee) a sign, that notwithstanding all thy neglects of God, notwithstanding all thy pursuits and wandrings after Airy bubbles of happiness in this World, he has not yet totally cast thee off, and left thee to thy own vain heart. Wherefore now*

4ly, *By way of* Petition, *beg of him that he will graciously through Christ Jesus vouchsafe to become thy Treasure and portion; As in the foregoing Chapter directed,* offer him up thy heart, *and beseech him to accept it, and both to make and keep it his. Lament thy wandrings and thy long alie-*

*nation*

*nation from thy alone true good.* Acknowledge thy Diſappointments of Happineſs, *and perpetual miſſing of ſatisfaction in the World; and beſeech of God, again and again, that he will enable thee with purpoſe of heart to cleave unto himſelf.*

Thirdly, *Pauſe now a while for* Meditation, *and due thought; that thy Reſolutions in the end, may be the riper, more conſiderate and durable. And eſpecially think with thy ſelf, Is there not more ſolid joy and comfort in a few moments of ſuch Addreſs to God, as this thou haſt now made, and in ſuch converſe with him, in well grounded hopes, and a reaſonable preſpect, that thou ſhalt hereafter have the perfect ſight and eternal enjoyment of the glorious God, than in all the Contentments and pleaſures thou ever yet taſteedſt in the World: Wherefore* reſolve,

1. To quit all other Happineſs *but the Almighty God, and to* take God alone for thy Portion, thy Shield and thy great Reward;

Reward: *Worldly Goods indeed thou maiſt uſe in thy journey; but thou maiſt not make them thine End, nor ſolace thy ſelf, without looking up to God in them.* Pſal. 73. 25, 26, 24, 28. Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee? My fleſh and my heart faileth, but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Thou Lord ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory. It is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my truſt in the Lord GOD that I may declare all his works in Heaven everlaſtingly before him. *Having thus reſolved in thy heart proceed and reſolve further.*

2. By all means poſſible to endeavour the ſecuring God as thy Portion for ever.

1. By good works in the general *ſenſe of the term, that is,* by

*by Universal and Impartial Obedience.*

2. *By good works* in a more particular sence (answerable to thy condition) as set down; *By Liberality to the poor; By other works of Bodily mercy; By Charity to Men's Souls, or the like.*

3. By faith with Humility, *daily to* make and maintain claim to God *as thy portion; And whatsoever else God shall direct thee. And may God direct thee, and be thy portion for ever. So prays the Author for thee whoever readest this; and so do thou pray for him while he lives.*

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

### *Of a Composed Estate, both of* Affairs and Mind.

§. 1. DIsentangling *our selves* from this World, *a necessary* Christian Duty.

§. 2. *The* means *thereto chiefly* Two, putting our Affairs in Order, *and* Composing our Minds.

§. 3. *Particular Directions hereto. Setting bounds to our desires and designs of getting.*

§. 4. *Putting and keeping our Estates or Accounts in such order as to be just to all.*

§. 5. *Of Restitution.*

§. 6. *Of Settling Children and Relations.*

§. 7. *Care in making and keeping a Will.*

§. 8. *Reconciliation to Mankind.*

§. 9. *Advice*

§. 9. *Advice to Relations, Secrets, &c.*
§. 10. *Reſigning them all to God, and laying aſide Solicitude.*
§. 11. *The Concluſion of this Part.*

§. 1 THoſe who have practiſed the former Advices or Preſcriptions, may be preſumed to have ſecured to themſelves a Happineſs in the other World; wherefore, being that it is moſt ſure they muſt ſhortly, and they know not how ſoon, depart hence, it now is both juſt and ſeaſonable to move them to *Diſentangle themſelves from this World.*

For the proving this to be all Chriſtian Peoples both *Duty* and *Intereſt*, let it but be granted (what is above ſet forth and has been proved) that it is our Duty and Intereſt to be *always ready*, and this inavoidably follows, that it is our Duty to be diſentangled. For is a Man ready for a Journey who has Fetters and Bolts on, or who is loaden with Chains and Irons, which it is not poſſible in a ſhort time to knock off, or rid him from? No more is the Man who is involved in the cares and buſineſs, but eſpecially in the Love of this World, fit

fit or ready for his paſſage into that heavenly Country; a Country or State wherein we are to live at another rate, than we do here; and for the Purity and Liberty whereof, we muſt be ſomewhat prepared by a holy and abſtract Life, before we can be capable of being bleſſed therein.

Nor does it ſeem needful to inlarge in ſhewing, how ſinful as well as how unreaſonable it is, for a Man to incumber himſelf or to remain incumbred, more than by his Duty neceſſitated, in worldly Affairs. There is nothing more commonly known than our Lord's reprimand or check to that buſy good Woman, Luke 10. 41. *Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.* The original terms μεριμνᾷς καὶ τυρβάζῃ aptly expreſs the Courſe and Nature of many of our Lives. They are nothing but *a State of diſtraction and tumult*; Nor can any thing be more plain than that the *cares of this Life and love of this World*, and buſy ploding about it do *put the Mind and Affections at as great a diſtance from God* as do moſt of thoſe *Sins* which are reputed the moſt *ſcandalous*,

*ſcandalous*, St. *John* affirms thus much; commanding (1 *John* 2. 15.) that we *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him.* And we have above had occaſion to conſider the ſad truth of the Apoſtle St. *Paul*'s obſervation touching Men that are reſolved to be rich. 1 Tim. 6. 9,10. *They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a ſnare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition. For the love of Money is the Root of all Evil, which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the Faith and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows.* In a word, *no wiſe* Man *will*, *no Chriſtian* Man *can*, *look* upon the *beſt Condition*, or moſt plentiful and firm ſettlement in this World, any otherwiſe than as a *Good Inn to a Traveller*. If we can get but convenient Refreſhments and Neceſſaries to paſs on with comfort, it is as much as we ſhould look after. The *way-faring Man, who turneth in to ſtay for a Night*, would be eſteemed a mad Man if he ſhould ſpend the time wherein he ſhould eat, reſt

reſt and ſleep, in furniſhing his Room, and laying in Stores of Proviſions and Superfluities, as if he were to abide there for term of Life. And juſt ſo wiſe a Courſe is it for us, who *have here no abiding place*, but are only to paſs on towards Heaven, to ſpend thoſe Days and Years, which God has allotted us for Life, and furniſhing our Souls with Knowledge, Grace and Vertue to qualify us for Heaven, meerly in Earthly Cares and Labours, and in endleſs Perplexities about compaſſing Wealth, which we muſt leave behind us (for ought we know before to morrow morning) to him that comes next; and which will be our loſs rather than advantage, when we come unto our true Home and Country. Good Works may follow us, but Money or Great Eſtates cannot, except it be to appear in Judgment againſt us; for coming unjuſtly by them, or ſetting our hearts too much upon them; and ſo, enſlaving our ſelves to them, and making meer Earth-worms of our Souls.

§. 2. But it is much more eaſie to demonſtrate the ſinfulneſs, unreaſonable and miſchievous conſequents of worldly

incumbrances, than to caſt them off, or find out a proper way to be rid of them. And the miſchief is, Men are uſually unwilling to be delivered of this Evil. They are golden Chains which this World caſts about us, and thoſe Men think too precious to fling away.

However, let me conſider, have I a Treaſure in Heaven? Is God my Happineſs? Does this World only put me at enmity with God, at leaſt keep me at a diſtance with him? Does it debaſe and enſlave my Soul, as I cannot but be ſenſible? Shall I not then be willing to be free from buſineſs and ſlavery? To be in perfection and poſſeſs'd of a bliſsful State? To behold God face to face? To love admire and enjoy him, rejoycing before him, and in him, Eternally? Without Wearineſs, without Satiety, nay even without Intermiſſion or Allay of the higheſt pleaſure my Nature is capable of? Can I refrain deſiring, at leaſt conſenting to be thus bleſſed? Can I chooſe but long for ſuch Change, and to that purpoſe ſhall I not ſit looſe to any thing that ſhall hinder it? Now if I duly attend to my own daily Experience, my

my worldly Affairs, Cares, and Buſineſs, do much hinder any preſent Reliſh of, or Preparedneſs for theſe Joys; They take me off even from minding them, and if I ſuffer them ſtill to poſſeſs my Thoughts and Affections, they will hinder me in my very paſſage to them; nay poſſibly obſtruct it totally. Let me then reſolve to put both my Self and Affairs into ſuch Order, as that I may at any time be ready to quit them, whenſoever and howſoever my Lord ſhall Call. Let my *mind be ſo compoſed*, and my *worldly Affairs ſo diſpoſed*, as that if God pleaſe ſuddenly to Call me hence, there may be nothing in my Affairs, which may much require my longer attendance on them, and I my ſelf may be as willing to leave them, as they are fit to be left; which is the *Fourth Duty* in Order to a Happy Death, and what we are at preſent to conſider more narrowly.

Here indeed may ſeem to be *Two diſtinct Duties* put together under one Head. The *Reducing our Worldly Affairs* into ſuch Order, and *our Minds* to ſuch a frame, as that we may be

ready for a ſudden removal. But the *main intention* and effect aimed at *being one and ſingle*, namely the *Soul's diſintanglement* or freedom for its flight, and that not being to be obtained, but by theſe two joynt means, and they too ſo interfering, as we ſhall ſee, there was reaſon thus to joyn or unite them. For ſuppoſing a Mans Worldly Affairs in confuſion and diſordered, it will be very hard for him, even upon the moſt evident and unavoidable approach of death, ſo to quiet himſelf as to be willing to go inſtantly out of this World, and leave them ſo. Again, ſuppoſe a Mans Affairs never ſo well modelled and ſettled, but yet his heart running out after the World, and fixing upon it, it will be impoſſible for him with eaſe to quit or bid adieu to what he deſires ſo much, and ſo paſſionately delights in, or dotes upon. Theſe two therefore in practice cannot and muſt not be ſeparated, nor is there any diſentanglement except both be effected. But ſuppoſe ſuch care and practice as to both, as here directed, there will enſue a certain diſentanglement

tanglement from this World in the Soul which ſo practiſes.

§. 3. Now for proper directions to this purpoſe the following particulars may be effectual. 1. *Set bounds to thy own deſires*, and even to thy *deſigns of getting*: Conſider with thy ſelf what may ſuffice thee and thine, and reſolve to acquieſce therein, not concerning thy ſelf to be farther rich. And for adjuſting and determining what may be ſufficient; Conſult not ſo much with the *Cravings of unreaſonable Appetite*, or with *Opinion*, (I might ſay, Pride and Ambition) as with the *Neceſſities and Conveniences of Nature*; and of thy *Degree*, Station or Condition; Plain and Common People ought not to think of living equal to the Gentry; Gentlemen not of living like Nobles; and proportionably is it to be reſolved touching Men of other Orders and Degrees. Now ſuch meaſures being taken, and according to them Men propounding to themſelves no more, than what may comfortably carry them, in ſuch or ſuch a rank, through the World, leaving to theirs what may alſo with Vertue and

Induſtry, as beforeſaid, ſupport them like their Relatives; we ſhall find the generality of Men might moſt reaſonably take up within much narrower bounds, than uſually they do, and ſo make their Lives much happier, their Hopes of future bleſſedneſs much more aſſured, and their Deaths much more Comfortable than are the Lives, Hopes, and Deaths of moſt Common Chriſtians. For ſuch People can neither live happily, nor die comfortably, who ſtill ſpend their whole time in getting, or in aiming at, more. There muſt be time to uſe, to enjoy, and then to diſpoſe of, as well as to get, if we will have comfort either in Life or Death. And ſuch times thoſe can never have, who never think they have enough, but are ſtill crying and deſigning More, More, and plodding for it. How ſoon might that Man be rich, who would ſatisfie himſelf with the Neceſſities, or even decent Conveniencies of Nature? And theſe certainly moſt People ought to ſatisfie themſelves with: But what Man can ever be rich, who accuſtoms himſelf to eſteem nothing to himſelf a ſuperfluity, and ſo nothing enough?

enough? Alas, how little is it that Nature requires, and what a little more, with Frugality and Prudence, would ſupply or adminiſter decent conveniencies; It is ſtill, I ſay, only Opinion that ſuffers not Men of Ordinary Eſtates to be rich, for Opinion indeed never will be ſatisfied. Thoſe therefore, who will not ſet due bounds to their deſires, with reſpect to the requiſits of Nature, and the Condition of themſelves and theirs, muſt in the greateſt plenty, ſtill be poor, unſatisfied, unquiet, in perpetual turmoil, and in moſt uneaſie concernment; and conſequently moſt unfit for Death. Indeed ſuch Perſons cannot be conceived in the greateſt abundance to have either Mind or Eſtate ſettled. This therefore muſt be reſolv'd on in the firſt place.

*Si ad Naturam vives nunquam eris pauper: Si ad Opinionem, nunquam eris dives. Exiguum Natura deſiderat, Opinio immenſum. Epicurus: Ut* Seneca *Epiſt. 6.*

Now to be ſhort ſuch competency either thou haſt, or thou haſt not. If thou haſt, thy buſineſs is, as ſoon as may be, ſo to ſettle all as will preſently be directed. If thou haſt not, conſider what

way of living thou art in? Is it such, as therein thou hast a reasonable prospect before thee, that by industrious proceeding in thy Calling, or way of Life, thou shalt get what thou judgest may be a Competency? Or else, art thou a Person of an unsettled rambling Mind and Life, fixt in no Calling, living at large, or what is the same in effect, living besides or beyond thy self? If any of the latter, 'tis a hard, if not an impossible thing, for thee, shouldest thou go out of the World speedily, to settle thy Affairs or Mind, and consequently to be prepared for Death. All thou canst do is, to take the best advice thou may'st with serious and discreet Friends, amongst which some Spiritual Guide ought to be consulted, what can be done according to thy particular circumstances; for these may be so various, or so intricate, that no Man without thy imparting them, can give any pertinent advice as to thee or them. Suppose thou survivest this unsettled condition, thou must immediately fix or retrench, and then the case will soon alter with thee, and thou wilt come within the compass of some

ſome of the following Directions. If thou doeſt not ſurvive, as to what can be done, the Directions now given are the ſumm.

But if a Man, having not yet obtained a Competency, be in a good Calling and fair way of thriving, let him in the Name of God comfortably, contentedly, and induſtriouſly proceed in his buſineſs, *ſeeking* ever *firſt the Kingdom of Heaven*, and expecting with Faith and Submiſſion God's Bleſſing upon his honeſt Induſtry. Such Perſon, if he be taken off in this courſe, need not diſquiet his Mind touching his Worldly Concerns. God will provide for thoſe, whom he vouchſafed not to the Pious Parent life to provide for. *Leave thy fatherleſs children, I will preſerve them alive, and let thy widows truſt in me.* Jer. 49. 11. In the mean while that ſuch induſtrious hopeful thriving (though perhaps not rich) Men may leave their Affairs as ſettled, and ſo their Minds as quiet, as in their Condition is poſſible, ſhould they ſuddenly be taken off, I would adviſe them inſtantly to do, what they would do, were it ſaid to them as

to

to *Hezekiah*, Iſai. 36. *Thou ſhalt forthwith die and not live*, (I mean were they ſure they ſhould die within a few days) Conſider with thy ſelf, my ſerious hopeful Friend, what wouldſt thou do in ſuch Caſe? Even the very ſelf ſame thing *cæteris paribus*, or for the main, that any honeſt rich Man ſhould do. And what is the next Direction? Thou wouldſt *as far as thou art able be Juſt to all Men.* Do this therefore, whether thou art Rich or Poor, in Order to the Diſentangling thee from the World, and having thy Concerns and Mind in a ſettled poſture; namely,

§. 4. 2dly, *Put thy Worldly Affairs into ſuch Order*, as to be to the uttermoſt of thy Power, *Juſt to all.* If thou art a dealer, ſet thy Books ſtraight, and keep them well. If otherwiſe, and ſo that thou keepeſt no Books, let ſome faithful Friends know thy Eſtate and Fortunes; Take care not to keep all private to thy ſelf: Remember St. *Paul's* Preſcript to all Chriſtian People, Rom. 13. 8. *Owe no Man any thing but to love one another.* At leaſt if neceſſity inforce thee that thou muſt owe, *Contract not*

*ſecret*

*ſecret debts*; Thou wilt forget them, and thy Heirs or Executors cannot be preſumed to know the State of them. Have no account of long ſtanding; let not old reckonings lie unſettled. Theſe things may be eaſily done in Health, Vigor, and Leiſure; they are in a manner impoſſible to one on a Death-bed.

Conſider with thy ſelf, thou art to be Juſt to all the World; Juſt to thine own, Juſt to Strangers; And he who is not Juſt to both, can ſcarce be Juſt to either: Now there is no ſuch preparative to be juſt to both, as to be open, and all above-board in our Eſtates and Concerns. For where things are ſecret, the Covetouſneſs of ſome will wrong the other, which plain free ſettling of things had prevented. The adjuſting accounts only when People are going out of the World, beſides that it is matter of miſerable diſtraction and diſcompoſure to the Dying Perſon, is generally imperfect (as being done in a hurry, with half attention and ſhort Conſideration) and many times leaves divers flaws, which are afterward matter of many Contentions and great Damage.

This

This therefore by those, who would be always prepared for Death, must be done at some distance, and in time of leisure and composedness. It comes therefore justly in this place.

§. 5. 3*dly*, If in this enquiry into, or, as I may call it Rummaging of thine estate, any part come to thy memory (or any considerable thing come to thy hand) which thou hast unjustly got, *separate that from all the rest, and restore it to the true owner or owners*; or, in case of their decease, to his or their *Kindred or Heirs*: Or finally, in case these cannot be found, or are at a distance and cannot be come at, give it or some better thing, (more worth than the true value of it, when first it came into thy possession) to the Poor. Leave not any thing unjustly gotten to thy Heirs. There is a strange unaccountable Canker through the just judgment of God, commonly attending all Goods, Estates, or parts of Estates dishonestly gotten; and 'tis better to leave a Man's posterity honestly poor, than unjustly rich; If any except against this Direction as too severe, and what may utterly impoverish

poverish many, let them remember the Frank and publick Profession of a good Publican, when he resolved to be for Heaven, *Luk.* 19. 8. *Behold, if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* Εἴ τινός τι συκοφάντησα, the word signifies a peculiar abuse of his office (too long here to explain) and so the import of the Text is, If in my way of living I have wrongfully gotten any thing from any man, I am content to restore double to what the Levitical Law required of a Thief, *Exod.* 22. 2. Now that which we have press'd, is only simple restitution of the thing or value, at which no reasonable or conscientious person can except. And this if thou canst do at present, do so; if not at present, yet make such provision, that after thy decease it may be truly done.

§. 6. 4*thly*, Standing thus fairly with all abroad, as to *those nearer thee*, who have dependance upon thee, *put them into*, or contrive for them, *the best and readiest way of living thou canst*. None should ever think of breeding, and therefore ought they to be careful not to leave a child to idleness; or which is much

much the same, to no Employment. Such who will not take to one thing, would do well at another. Let each have something to follow, if it be but to keep them from wasting too fast, what thou maist leave them. But especially endeavour to secure them all in a Vertuous and Industrious way of living. Vertue and Industry are the most secure and lasting fortune in this world, and besides the fairest way to a better and eternal Inheritance. It is a very wholesome note if we duly time it, that *Calvin* has on *Hezekiah*'s being commanded to set his house in Order: "Our chiefest care, "says he, herein should be, not so much "touching Legacies and appointing "Heirs and Executors, "but to provide for "the salvation of those "whom God has com- "mitted to our care. This I say, (and am content to think the Author supposed) ought to be practised at a convenient distance, as near as we can from death, and before we make our

In *Isai.* cap. 38.

*Præcipua Cura esse debet, non legatorum & institutionis hæredis, sed ut eorum quos dominus Curæ nostræ commisit saluti consulatur.*

our wills, for then commonly it is of the lateſt. However this leads to the next particular.

§. 7. *5ly*, If thou wouldeſt have thy mind in ſuch frame, and thy worldly matters in ſuch order as to be ever ready at thy Lord's call, *Live not without a Will by thee*, ſuppoſing thou haſt any thing to diſpoſe of. This is not only prudence, but ordinarily duty. For in caſe we ſhould be ſuddenly taken away, how elſe can we be juſt to others; either to our neighbours abroad, or to thoſe at home of our own Blood and Family? It was we know in expreſs terms by God commanded to good *Hezekiah* as a preparative for Death, *Iſa.* 38. 1. And we may obſerve ſome who have had little care of making any other preparation for Death, not to have been negligent in this behalf. *Achitophel* would *ſet his houſe in order*, though his next buſineſs was to *hang himſelf*. A dreadful inſtance of a worldly wiſe, but irreligious, deſperate man: Notwithſtanding, what may well mind us of our Lord's obſervation on Mammoniſts, *The children of this world are in their generation wiſer than the children*

*children of light*, Luk. 16. 8. Let us not then diſdain to imitate any in whatſoever they do wiſely, as long as it is conſiſtent with good conſcience. And ſuch certainly is, what at preſent is urged.

Now as concerning making our wills, let us conſider, it is one of the ſolemneſt and weightieſt acts of our lives, and therefore to be done: (1) *In the fear of God and with great conſideration and conſcience, without Paſſion and fond Partiality.* For a Man's laſt Will and Teſtament is to ſurvive him, (let it not therefore be a Monument of the Teſtator's folly, injuſtice or Vice) and the effects of it may be almoſt immortal. Wherefore (2.) it will not be amiſs ordinarily to take advice not ſo much of Learned Lawyers (though in many caſes that alſo is to be done) as of prudent and ſerious Chriſtian Friends; by whoſe direction, if not on our own heads, we may inſert into our wills ſome Tokens of our Faith and Chriſtian Hope; ſome Injunctions, Proviſo's or Conditions, which may oblige our poſterity to what they perhaps would otherwiſe neglect; we may hereby be Benefactors to their ſouls

ſouls a long time after our death. However certainly a Chriſtian Man's Will ſhould beſpeak him ſeriouſly a Chriſtian. And,

Laſtly, If we have wherewithal, *let us not forget the Poor.* It were better indeed to do that ſooner, that we might have the Prayers of the Poor to accompany our departing ſouls, *Luk.* 16. 9. But whether we have been liberal before or not, ſomething of this kind ought not to be omitted in any able perſons laſt Will. The beſt of us commonly have ſome odd ends of Debts of Charity; if not of juſt recompence to the Poor, which it is needful we pay, when going our long journey.

§. 8. *6thly*, Beſides this *Charity* in giving there may be alſo *another part in forgiving*, very neceſſary to the compoſing of moſt perſons minds, eſpecially when they are looking toward death, as well as otherwiſe requiſite to the qualifying them for appearing before God. *For if ye forgive men their treſpaſſes, your Heavenly Father will alſo forgive you, But if you forgive not men their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father for-*

*give your treſpaſſes*, Mat. 6. 14, 15. Reconcile therefore thy ſelf, as far as poſſible, to Mankind, and take care to live ſo reconciled. As to making amends for any ſatisfiable wrong done by our ſelves, as it is comprized in the nature of true repentance, ſo it has been there, and lately lookt to and preſt; and is ſuppoſed already done. But we may alſo have ſuffered, as well as done wrong; and whether all men may have been juſt to us or no, we are as we have ſeen by the condition aſſigned by our Lord, for our very own pardon, obliged to be charitable to them. Let therefore no mans injuſtice imbitter our ſpirits; for any revengeful inclination or affection will be doubly to our own injury, firſt in obſtructing our pardon in the Court of Heaven; then in diſturbing our peace within our ſelves. The deſire of revenge is very far from being in it ſelf at any time an eaſie and tame paſſion, much leſs can it be matter of comfortable reflection to any one of good Conſcience, or conſiſting with inward peace. And certainly we have need of all good Conſcience, of all comforts and peace poſſible,

possible, to fortifie us against death, that last Enemy.

Nor will a good man only take care that his own heart be pacified, but he will have so much charity for others, who perhaps have been uncharitable enough to him, to endeavour the pacification of theirs also, before he go out of the world. If any man bear me a grudge, though without my fault, I cannot give a more Christian Testimony of my forgiving him, than by endeavouring to deliver him before I die from under that sin. And I ought to be the more careful herein, because I cannot tell but some sinful infirmities of mine own, may have more provoked him, and given him (in his opinion) juster cause of offence, than I am aware of; and what is just in his opinion, it is reasonable for him to adhere to, till he be convinced otherwise. Now what so happy way to bring such person to reason, as the melting addresses of a dying man, or of one who is as dying? The making up therefore of all quarrels betwixt us and others, yea though we are the injured, not the injurious party, is very

requiſite, where poſſible, to compleating our peace both with God, and in our ſelves. The Apoſtle's Rule is, *If it be poſſible, as much as in you lieth,* [τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, *rather as to your part*, elſe it ſeems a little Tautological] *if it be poſſible, ON YOUR PART* (ſays he) *live peaceably with all men*; and much more die ſo.

§. 9. *7thly*, As to parting with Friends and Relations, as well as with perſons more eſtranged from us, ſome conſideration is to be had. But the larger Directions will be of another place. Mean while as to any Admonitions (and the words of dying men, or of men ſpeaking as if upon their death-bed, ſink deep and ſtick long) whatſoever ſerious counſels there are, which we ſhould give to any of our Friends, were we now at point of death, nothing hinders, but at ſome convenient time, even in the ſtate of health, we may gravely and affectionately give them theſe; Prefacing them in this, or ſuch like manner: *My Dear Child*, [*Friend*, or otherwiſe as occaſion requires] *I muſt die, I know not how, nor how ſoon, but if I were now dying,*

*dying, and breathing out my laſt, with that laſt breath would I give thee this counſel* [*make this requeſt, impoſe upon thee this command* —or otherwiſe, &c.] *Take it therefore now leſt thou and I ſhould not have then opportunity for it, and remember it as the Counſel* [Admonition or Command, &c.] of thy *dying Father*, [Friend, &c.] Then give thy Counſel, ſignifie thy deſire, &c. Counſel thus once given, and as occaſion may offer, thus at convenient times ingeminated or repeated, may have the ſame weight, make the ſame impreſſion, and will every whit as much ſerve to the diſcharging of our Conſcience, and ſo for the compoſing our minds for death, as if it were given upon the Death-bed.

The ſame may I ſay *as to any ſecrets* which we have to impart, and which it is expedient our Friends or Relations ſhould know, convenient time in ſtate of health and leiſure, may be taken, and needful Prefaces uſed, ſo as to impart them even at a diſtance from our death. Or if the ſecrets be of ſuch nature, as it is not expedient our Friends ſhould

know them when we are in health, or till we are going, or gone out of the world, a Letter may be writ, and put up ſealed with our Will, to ſuch perſon, to whom the ſecret does belong: Or in caſe we are not able to write, ſome faithful friend, with whom we can, or do, intruſt the ſecrets of our Eſtate, may be intruſted herewith, to impart it to our Friends at or after our death. By theſe or like means, which common diſcretion will ſuggeſt, may a man before hand diſcharge his Conſcience to his Friends, ſo as to have his mind, even in reference to them, compoſed and eaſie, and himſelf at a diſtance as ready for death, as if it were at hand.

§. 10. Laſtly, (whether of the main or ſubordinate Directions it matters not) having done thy beſt as has been before preſcribed, with good Conſcience to ſettle thy affairs and thy mind, though thou preſumeſt thy ſelf never at ſo great a diſtance from death, yet as *fully and intirely* as if thou wert now to die, and together, *comfortably and quietly reſign up thy ſelf, and all thine, to God.*

Let

Let him now from henceforth work his will, and diſpoſe of thee and thine as he pleaſes. Do thou quietly await his good pleaſure: Thine own perſon (ſoul and body) and the perſons of all thy dear Relations or Friends, by Faith and Prayer commit to him, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and do this daily as long as thou liveſt. Thy Eſtate and Goods give up according to his good pleaſure, he being the moſt wiſe Diſpoſer as well as the alone true Proprietor and Lord of all: Thou haſt, as his Inſtrument, endeavoured to diſpoſe of all as wiſely and conſcionably as thou canſt; but when thou art gone, which way, in a ſhort time, all will go, whether to thine, or to ſtrangers, whether to *a wiſe man or to a fool*, thou neither canſt, nor ſhalt know; nor does it truly concern thee to preſage or forebode. Much leſs ſhouldeſt thou diſturb thy quiet about it, thy duty's done. *Thy children may come to Honour, and thou know it not; and they may be brought low, but thou perceive it not of them.* Trouble not therefore thy ſelf now as to what comes after thee. *Eccleſ.* 2. 19. *Job* 14. 21.

If thou conſiderately ſurviveſt theſe Preparations, thou maiſt alter things, as in Chriſtian prudence thou at leiſure ſhalt ſee occaſion: If not thy Province is diſcharged: God is at peace with thee, thou haſt a happineſs (Him for thy happineſs) to go to. Happy man! ſet thy heart at reſt, abandon Sollicitude, addreſs to what comes, with a Chriſtian temper; and make the moſt Heavenly and Spiritual uſe thou canſt of all that comes, bidding ſtill all welcome as from God.

§. 11. This is plainly a moſt eaſeful and bleſſed temper, able in a great meaſure to felicitate any perſon. Whoſoever has thus practiſed, and continues in this ſtate and practice, is plainly prepared for death. For the three aforementioned intentions (beyond which in this period we could ſee nothing neceſſary) are attained: He has a Happineſs to go to (the infinite God is his Portion.) He has provided againſt all he can fear, ſin and the wrath due to it. Sin he has forſaken, and endeavoured to extirpate, and the guilt of it (that is obligation to the wrath due) is done away;

away; for he has made his peace with God in Chriſt; and he has diſintangled himſelf from the world: He may therefore take up good old *Simeon's* Hymn, *Lord now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace.* And add thereto St. *John's* Reſponſe to the Churches Invitatory, *Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly.*

Only if his Lord delayeth his coming it will concern him to watch: To have *his light burning, and to keep oyl in his veſſel with his lamp*; that is to maintain this bleſſed temper; and *to ſtrengthen thoſe things which are weak*; to fill up what is defective, to take care his heart and his *works be perfect before God*, that is ſincere; *to hold faſt, and be faithful to the end*, that *no man take his Crown.*

Of which Duties we are next to conſider: In the mean time, *Bleſſed is that ſervant whom his Lord at his coming ſhall find ſo doing.*

Matter

## Matter and a Method for Devotions ſuitable to Chapter the Fifth.

*IN point of* Examination *or Inquiry into our condition, here will be* Matter of a new nature, *and different from what as yet came before us. For hitherto in our Devotional engagements, the enquiries we have ſtill made, were touching diſorders of heart, or our particular guilt, (Sins Habitual or Actual.) But now being engaged, as well to ſettle our worldly affairs, as to purge our Souls and quiet our minds, and the purging, diſentangling and quieting our ſelves depending ſo much on our outward circumſtances. After ſuch endeavours of a ſerious thoughtful temper and ſhort Prayer, as uſual at our entring into our privacy, we muſt* look without, *and ſet our ſelves to conſider in plain terms,* What eſtate or worldly ſubſtance we have, and how it lyes? *What* Relations *alſo, and* Dependants? *Or what* Dependencies *we our ſelves*

*ſelves have upon others? What* Dealings *and* Contracts *we are engaged in? What our* Debts and Credits? *Theſe queſtions we muſt ſeriouſly put to our ſelves, and endeavour true anſwers and accompts, in the fear of God, as really making matter of Conſcience of ſuch Inqueſt. For without this kind of practice a perſon that has had any thing to do in the world, or has lived any conſiderable time therein, cannot be juſt to the world, when he goes out of it. And for directing to ſuch work as this, in quality of a matter of Conſcience, and a work of ſecret or Cloſet-Devotion, I have great reaſon, in as much as good conſcience, and our peace both with God and our ſelves, is ſo intimately concerned in it. For 'tis moſt certain a man cannot die a good Chriſtian, or with juſt hopes of Heaven, except he die, to his power, a juſt man. In plain* Engliſh *then,*

1. *The firſt buſineſs here thou haſt to do is,* To make a true and plain Inventory of thy Eſtate, Debts and Credits. *This however it may be too tedious to be done by thy ſelf in ſecret, yet it muſt be here-*

*here reſolved upon, ordered to be done, and a general contrivance of it laid. At leaſt, when done, it will be expedient in ſecret between God and thy ſelf to* View, Examine and Conſider it.

2. *Next, being thou art upon Preparation for Death, which ſtrips thee of all, thou muſt* ſet thy ſelf in good earneſt to think of parting with all, *and bidding adieu (at leaſt* in heart and affection, *at the very preſent) to this world. To make thee ſerious in ſuch thought,* Poſſeſs thy ſelf (by way of Meditation) *of the following Points briefly.*

1. It is appointed for all men once to die, *and this fate moſt certainly and unavoidably attends thee in particular. Thou muſt die; But thou* knoweſt not *(that is men in health and common Circumſtances generally know not)* How, *(by what mean, in what condition,* &c.) *nor* when, *nor* where, *whether by a diſeaſe, or by accident as we ſpeak? Whether in*

*in thy ſenſes and with uſe of ſpeech*, &c. *or not*? *Whether to morrow, or the next Day, or next Week, or Month*; *or even this night may thy ſoul be required of thee. Whether at home, in thy bed, or in the field*, &c.

2. Death deprives thee of the enjoyment of all things and perſons here. *No poſſible fruit to thee of any the leaſt part of what thou haſt after death.*

3. Is it not then much better, and more becoming *a reaſonable being (much more a wiſe diſcreet perſon, as we would be thought to be)* to part with all, conſiderately, gravely, willingly and in good order, *than by conſtraint, in a hurry to be ſnatcht away, with both Mind and Eſtate all in confuſion*?

4. *Thou art no whit the nearer Death when a wiſe, creditable, Religious*

*ligious diſpoſal of all is made than before: Only thou art readier for it, let it come how and when God pleaſes.*

*A brief Meditation upon theſe reaſonable Heads methinks ſhould diſpoſe a man to the practice of all the Directions delivered in the Body of the Chapter.*

3. *As to point* of Prayer; *the matter hereof will be to ſeveral perſons different, according to their different condition as to this world. Yet I think men of all conditions, rich and poor, may agree in the following Particulars as too commonly pertinent and ſeaſonable enough unto all ſorts.*

1. By way of Confeſſion, *ſetting forth and bewailing their adheſion to this world.*

2. By way of Petition, *beging of God a diſentangled heart, a mind content with ſuch things as we have; Heavenly affections, true Chriſtian contempt of this world,* &c.

*But*

*But as to the* differences of mens concerns *in this Point. By the reſult of the firſt Point of Enquiry above mentioned, Particular perſons will find themſelves in different Conditions; namely either* Rich *or* Poor, *or* in a midling condition. *And it is to be remembred here, what has been above ſuggeſted, we muſt eſtimate our ſelves Rich or Poor with Relation to our Degree or Rank. An ordinary perſon that is worth five hundred Pound is truly richer than a Perſon of Quality, or a Nobleman, that dies worth five thouſand, perhaps fifty thouſand.*

*Now in caſe upon ſuch Enquiry or Examination as above, we find our ſelves rich, or conſidering our Quality not Poor, but in good midling condition. Here will be,*

(1) Matter of further Enquiry or Examination, *whether this Eſtate was gotten by our own Induſtry, or left us. If the former, have we got it juſtly in a fair induſtrious way of following our Vocation? Or have we not oppreſt ſome particular Perſons or Families*

*lies to inrich our ſelves. In ſuch caſe,*

(2) *Here is* Confeſſion *neceſſary in the firſt place (at leaſt) to God. Then purſuant to the ſecond Direction, in the Body of the Chapter muſt follow,*

(3) *A* Reſolution of being juſt, *and this cannot be in the preſent caſe without* reſtitution *to the injured perſon, according to Direction the third. In which behalf it will be neceſſary,*

(4) *To* take Advice; *ſo that here there muſt be ſomething of* Confeſſion to Man, *at leaſt to a Friend or Spiritual Guide. Which being done, or for the preſent honeſtly reſolved upon,*

(5) Prayer and Supplication *to God for pardon muſt ſucceed. The ſin and its aggravations are to be conſidered; how long lived in? Againſt what light, what checks of*

*of Conſcience? And accordingly our Prayers muſt be more earneſt, and ſo in due method peace is to be made with God.*

*On the other ſide, if the Body of the Eſtate we have were left us, yet here again will be* (1) Matter of Enquiry, *and Self-examination, What Stewards we have been? Have we encreaſed our Patrimony, or been Prodigal? Have we been the better for being ſo early provided for? Have we more improved our Souls in Knowledge and in Vertue, by means of the liberal fortunes left us by our Anceſtors, or of our liberal Education conſequent to that, and of leiſure conſequent to all? Have we done good to our Poor Neighbours, Relations,* &c. *And in caſe we have increaſed our Paternal Eſtate, by what means did we ſo encreaſe it? By juſt or unjuſt practices? According to all thoſe, and poſſibly more differences which enquiry will ſuggeſt.*

(2) Suitable Confeſſions and Supplications *are to be addreſt to God.*

*But admit all be found to be just,* (*or indeed whether it be or no*) *it will still concern* all rich persons *in Prayer,* (1) *To* beg of God pardon for all unknown sins in way of inriching themselves, *or but of keeping and maintaining what they have; for unknown sins all men have.*

(2) *To give* Praise and Thanksgiving *to that Bountiful God, whose* blessing *alone* maketh rich, *and who has not taken vengeance on them to blast their Estates.*

(3) *To* implore of God both Wisdom and Will to dispose of all, *so as may turn to his Glory and their own future accounts.*

*Again in the other case, suppose we find our selves poor, or* (*which is little better*) *incumbred. Here will be fit matter of* Self-Examination, *whether our Poverty and Incumbrances be our* fault (*through some improvidence of our own*) *or only our* misery and infelicity. *If the former, such sin or sins of ours, which have occasioned our Poverty or Incumbrances are to be repented of, according to the Directions given for repenting of other sins. If the latter,*

*latter, we are to consider. No misery befalls man by chance* (Afflictions come not out of the dust) *but from the hand of God. Nor does God* afflict willingly (לבו *mero motu*) *or arbitrarily* grieve the children of men. *There is certainly in thee some reason of this thy Poverty. Search what it is. Humble thy self for what thou conjecturest it to be, and quietly submit thy self to his Wisdom and Will, acknowledging thy self to have deserved worse, than thou hast received at his hand, and believing all is for thy good.* Lam. 3. 33.

*But in such mean and poor condition to carry on the mind to as much Settlement, and so to as much preparedness for Death, as we can. Either we have a reasonable prospect of surviving these our present preparations or not. If we have, it will be meet,*

1. *To* consider how *we may* honestly put our selves and ours *into* a better condition? *How we may get rid of our Incumbrances? To this purpose review the Directions in the Chapter, consult Friends,* &c.

2. Reſolve *on what offers it ſelf fitteſt, and practiſe it without diſtraction, and with as heavenly, calm, contented mind as thou canſt.*

3. *By* Earneſt Prayer, *more largely as thou art able* at preſent, *and according to convenience in thy* daily Devotions, *beſeech God,* (1) *To* guide, aſſiſt *and* bleſs *thee, even* in thy very common affairs, *throughout the remaining part of thy Pilgrimage, by his Providence leading thee into the meeteſt way of living, quickning thy induſtry, giving thee skill and prudence in thy buſineſs,* (Iſa. 28. 26.) *giving ſucceſs to thy endeavours.*

(2) *By ways and means beſt known unto him to* provide for thee and thine. *And above all,*

(3) *To* give *to thee and* keep *in thee a* quiet, content, and heavenly mind *all thy days, whatſoever thy portion here ſhall be.*

*But if we have little or no hopes of longer continuance in this world, then according as directed, what can be done muſt be done to go honeſtly out of it. And when*

*when we have done our utmoſt to be honeſt, but not till then, we may, upon Repentance for our miſmanagements, quiet our ſelves through Faith and Hope, notwithſtanding all our Poverty, and it will concern us in ſecret,*

(1.) *To* Reſolve upon *and actually* endeavour ſuch Quiet.

(2.) *To* pray to God, *that by his Spirit he will ſtrengthen our* Faith *and* Hope, *and beſtow upon us* Peace.

(3.) *By Prayer to* commit our helpleſs ones *to him who* feedeth the Ravens and cloatheth the Lilies of the Field. *We may well truſt our Relations with him, with whom we truſt our Souls.*

*But whether rich or poor (ſuppoſing our ſelves qualified) we muſt by no means neglect our* Will. *And this being an Act of Juſtice and Charity to the*

*World, ought be thought on in secret before God.*

*Being then thus prepared, we may proceed to the Practice of the next Directions of* Disposing of our Families *or Relations (if we have any) and* making our Wills, *which though they may take up more time, and need more Assistance than we can have in our Closet, yet here most conveniently shall we first consider and resolve thereon. Particular Ways or Methods may be thought of afterwards, and such Considerations which have been at first in private taken up, by Advice with Friends, meliorated or altered for the better.*

*Touching making a Will, to the Directions given in the body of the Chapter, it may not be amiss to add here, as fit for our retired Thoughts,*

1. *If by any thing in thy Life, the World have had Reason to suspect thy Religion; or if thou hast ever heard or understood thy self to have been a Person suspected in point of Religion, either*

*either as having none at all, or being corrupt therein. In the beginning of thy Will, put this Matter out of Question by making therein* a short but pathetical Profession of thy Faith and Hope.

2. *From thence proceeding to dispose of what thou hast*; Beware thou bequeath not any thing ill got to any but the Poor: *Even to them it may not be bequeathed, if thou knowest how to restore it to those to whom of right it appertaineth. For* God the Lord loves Judgment (*that is Justice*) and hates Robbery for a burnt offering. *Isai.* 61. 8. *But in case the true owner cannot be come at, the Poor are God's, and their most proper Receivers.*

3. Consider *and weigh diligently* the different Condition, Temper, Humour and Manners

of thy Relations *or Dependents. Some haply may be of more eaſy Natures, leſs capable to buſtle in the World: Others more able to help themſelves or get their own. Some more improvident, and leſs Maſters of themſelves (I mean leſs apt to keep what they have:) Others more thrifty and apt to improve. Some have been ſober, orderly, obedient and dutiful; others clear contrary. All theſe and the like Qualities or Circumſtances ought to be maturely weighed, in the Fear of God, and as before him, to whom we muſt ſhortly give an Account of our Stewardſhip. And whatſoever there is of Legacies to each ought to be ſuited accordingly: The* weak *ſhould not have any thing that is litigious or perplext left them: The* Improvident *not truſted with too much in their own Hand, or not with all at once. The* Dutiful *ſhould have a mark of Kindneſs ſet upon them; yet not*

*not ſo as to deprive the Firſt-born of his Right. Theſe Points require* Thought *before God,* Prayer *and* Advice.

4. *Conſider alſo, whether, through any overſight of thine or otherwiſe, there be any* Flaw or Intanglement *to which any* part of what thou haſt is obnoxious, *and before thou goeſt out of the World, openly and candidly* diſcover all to prudent Friends, *or to the Perſons concern'd. A few Words from thy ſelf, who muſt be ſuppoſed to know the State of thy Affairs better than Strangers, or thoſe who come after thee, may clear, what, when thou art gone, would be mightily and Intricately involved.*

*Laſtly,* Examine thy ſelf, *whether there be no* Truſts repoſed in thee, *or no* Secret depoſited *with thee; and in theſe, and any like Caſes, pro-*

*provide for the discharge of a good Conscience.*

*These Directions indeed belong chiefly to the* richer and abler sort *of People; though as to some Points they may not be unserviceable,* in some Proportion, to most who have Families, *or Relations in the World. Every one may and ought to consider, what their present Condition is in this world, what little they are possessed of, what they have to do with that little, and resolve to make the best of all for their safe dispatch to Heaven. There are indeed* some Persons *(and those sometime* intelligent *too, contemptible for nothing except Poverty:) at* so low an Ebb, *that instead of* Legacies *to those whom they leave behind them, they have only* Counsels, Directions or Commands to bequeath to them. *Or possibly they may have Christian Friends, to whose Care and Bounty they can be bold to commend their helpless Family. Such things ought by those, who would be in this Condition prepared*

*for*

*for Death, to be thought on betimes (even before God in ſecret) and Order taken, either uſing their own Endeavour, or adviſing with Perſons proper, and eſpecially with a ſpiritual Guide, if need be, for beſt managing and ſettling their poor Affairs. And thus of what we are to conſider and examine our ſelves of in private as to worldly Matters and Concerns.*

*There remains now only* Prayer *and* Reſolution *ſuitable to the laſt Direction, which no one can be at a loſs for who conſiders how eaſily the body of the Direction runs either into Prayer or Reſolution. As for Inſtance;* "*Lord* "*I have done my beſt to my Pow-*"*er, with good Conſcience, to ſettle* "*both my Affairs and my Mind. And* "*now as fully and intirely as if I were* "*at preſent to die, do I deſire, with* "*comfort and quiet, to reſign my ſelf* "*and all mine to thee. From hence-*"*forth work thy will, O Lord, and* "*diſpoſe of me and mine as thou* "*pleaſeſt,* &c.

No

*No understanding Person who has the Directions before him, and a Sense thereof, but will be able by the usual Assistances of God's grace, to procced in a Way acceptable to God and comfortable to himself.*

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

FINIS.